MISSIONS AND APOSTLES OF MEDIÆVAL EUROPE

BY THE

REV. G. F. MACLEAR, D.D.

Warden of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, and

Late Hulsean Lecturer and Tutor of Queens' College, Cambridge

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CHAPTER I.

THE MISSION FIELD OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

FIRST, it will be well to notice some of the more striking features, moral and religious, of the nations which awaited the missionary zeal of the Christian Church. As an outline is all that can possibly be attempted, we may, sinking minor divergences of race, and regarding them solely in their social and religious aspects, arrange these nations under the several groups of Celts, Teutons, and Sclaves.

1. The Celtic races had, except in Ireland and Northern Britain, to a great extent become amalgamated with the institutions, feelings, and social life of their Roman conquerors, and had learned to ascribe to their deities the attributes of the gods of Rome. We are therefore hardly concerned with their religious creed, except so far as they formed an advanced outpost among the Western nations, and, when evangelized by Christian missionaries, became, in their turn, signally ardent and

successful preachers of their newly-adopted faith.

The Commentaries of Cæsar give us the earliest sketch of the social and moral features of the Celtic character. During his campaigns, which lasted upwards of fourteen years, and cost him two millions of men, this great commander had ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with them, and he has described with minute accuracy their gigantic stature, fair complexions, enormous muscular strength, and love of personal decoration.[1]

Fond of war, hot of temper, but simple and void of malice, they knew little of that personal liberty, which was the proud characteristic of the Teuton. While the meanest Teuton was independent and free, the lower orders among the Celts were little better than in a state of slavery, for all real freedom and power centred in their chieftains.

The same great warrior has given us the fullest account of the Druids, the all-powerful religious order of the Celtic tribes. Under their various divisions, they were at once the ministers of a theocracy and the judges and legislators of the people. Enjoying an immunity from service in the army and the obligation to pay taxes, they instructed the youth of the nation in the mysteries of learning, the majority of which they veiled in inviol-

[1] Cæsar, "De Bel. Gall." vi. 13.

able secrecy, and did not suffer to be committed to writing. The chief doctrine, however, that they did impart, seems to have been the immortality of the soul, or rather its transmigration to another body, to which was added instruction in the nature and motions of the sun, moon, and stars, and the power and greatness of the immortal gods.

Though proscribed by successive Roman generals, and nominally exterminated in Britain by Suetonius Paulinus, Druidism lingered on for centuries in Ireland and the Scottish Highlands. In the "Book of Armagh" the monarch of Ireland is represented, at the arrival of St. Patrick, as having in his service his soothsayer and magicians, his augurs and diviners. A member of the same order withstood with the utmost pertinacity the first preaching of St. Columba in Scotland,[1] and in the "Book of Leinster" we find an early Irish king asking the Druids to ascertain for him by their arts the events that were to happen to him during the ensuing year.

Almost of equal rank with the Druids was the Ollamh, the "bard" or "gleeman," and only a step lower stood the Seanchaidhe, the

[1] See Adamnan's "Life of St. Columba," by Reeves, p. 74 *n*. In the Irish MS. of St. Paul's Epistles at Wurtzburg the gloss on Jannes and Jambres, in 2 Tim. iii. 8, is *duo Druidæ Ægyptiaci*. In an ancient hymn, ascribed to St. Columba, we find the expression, "Christ the Son of God *is my Druid*." Miscell. Irish Arch. Soc. i. 8.

"historian" or "story-teller." The person of the former was regarded as inviolate. With the princes and the Druids, he took part in the great national assemblies; he ranked next to the monarch himself, had a fixed title in the chieftain's territory, besides ample perquisites for himself and his attendants, and by carrying or sending his wand to any person or place he conferred a temporary sanctuary from injury or arrest.

As to the Celtic religious belief, however modified it may have been by subsequent contact with Roman or Teutonic systems, it is clear that in its original form it was essentially the worship of the powers of nature. Highest in the Celtic pantheon was the sun, the "life of everything," the "source of all being," who shared the devotion of his worshippers with the moon and stars, with genii of the hills and the valley, of the grove and the spring. The sacred principle of fire also received special adoration. The season of the vernal equinox was ushered in by the sacred festival of the Bel-tine, or "the lucky fire," and was celebrated with those peculiar rites, which once from every hill-top in Ireland welcomed the return of the solar beams and the banishment of winter's gloom, but now linger only in the popular sports of May Day.

The records of missionary labour in Ireland and Scotland do not make any special mention of those numerous gods, which Cæsar describes

as worshipped in Gaul, and to which he has transferred the attributes of the deities of Rome. But the apostle of Ireland is represented in the earliest annals as recalling his converts from the worship not only of spectres and genii, but of idols also, the greatest of which, the image of Crom-cruach,[1] stood on the plain of Magh Slecht, "the Plain of Adoration," in the county of Cavan, and was the chief object of native worship till its destruction by him.

As a rule, however, the original form of the Druidic ritual was marked by much simplicity. The shadow of the sacred grove, or the wide-spreading oak with its mystic mistletoe, was the Druid's temple; the hill-top, with its cromlech or altar-stone, his nearest approach to architecture; while the triple procession round the sacred circle from east to west, the search for the mistletoe on the sixth day of the moon, the sacrifice of the milk-white bull, and the usual methods of augury and divination, constituted the chief portion of his sacred rites. But at particular times the earnest craving to appease offended powers, or the dread of sudden danger, or the outbreak of

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1 "Supposed to have been also termed *Crom-dubh*, 'the black stooping-stone,' and to have given rise to the name of *Cromdubh* or *Cromduff* Sunday, by which the last Sunday in summer, or the Sunday next before All Saints' Day, is commonly known in Ireland."—Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," p. 128.

some terrible pestilence, suggested the offering of those sacrifices of human beings which Cæsar has described, and which long continued to be the custom of the Celtic tribes.

2. With this outline of Celtic superstitions, we must pass on to the Teuton. Under this generic name we include not only the inhabitants of the extensive region ; which, bounded by the Baltic on the north, the Rhine on the west, the Vistula and Oder on the east, may be called, with tolerable accuracy, the European home of the Teutonic tribes, but also those hardy Northmen, whose gaudy but terrible barks bore them, during the eighth and ninth centuries, from their homes in Denmark and Sweden to be the scourge of the European shores.

Differ as these undoubtedly did in minor points, in all the essentials of their moral and religious character they were similar, and for our purposes it will suffice to speak of them together.

The earliest Teutonic doctrine, then, appears to have recognized one Supreme Being, whom it represents as Master of the universe, whom all things obey.

"Who is first and eldest of the gods?" it is asked in the Edda, and the answer is, "He is called Allfadir in our tongue. He lives from all ages, and rules over his realm, and sways all things, great and small ; he made heaven and earth, and *the lift*—that is, the

sky—and all that belongs to them ; and, what is more, He made man, and gave him a soul that shall live and never perish, though the body rot to mould or burn to ashes. His is an infinite power, a boundless knowledge, an incorruptible justice. He cannot be confined within the enclosure of walls, or represented by any likeness to the human figure." [1]

Such appears to have been the primitive faith. Allfadir would be a name naturally dear to a people which as yet had hardly passed the limits of the patriarchal state, amongst whom every father of a family was at once a priest and king in his own house.

But the idea of a pure spirit was too refined to retain any lasting hold on the mind and conscience. It lost its original distinctness, and retired more and more into the background, surviving only as the feeble echo of an older and purer creed. Just as the Aryan in crossing the Hindu Alps was spellbound by the new and beauteous world into which he was transplanted, so the Teuton, in the course of his migrations towards colder climes, bowed down before the wild and overbearing powers of nature, and then out of nature-worship arose an elaborate form of hero-worship, the adoration of the conquerors of nature, that is, of man himself, with his virtues and his vices.

[1] See Dasent's "Norsemen in Iceland," p. 187, and compare Tacitus, "Germania," chap. ix.

From the Invisible One emanates, so thought the Teuton, an infinite number of inferior deities, whose temple is every part of the invisible world. Hence nature was to be venerated in all her forms and manifestations. The heavenly bodies, the sun and moon and stars; the earth, with its trees and springs, its fountains and hills; the sea, with its ebb and flow, its storm and calm;—all were regarded with deepest reverence. And since all nature was but an organ and instrument of deity, it was of the utmost importance to pay attention even to the most indifferent phenomena. Nothing was too trifling. The quivering leaf, the crackling flame, the falling thunderbolt, the flight or singing of birds, the neighing of horses, man's dreams and visions, even the movements of his pulse, all needed attention, all might give some sign from the other world.

Hence the peculiar regard that was paid, amongst all the Teutonic nations, Gothic, Saxon, and Scandinavian, to oracles and divinations, to auspices, presages, and lots. Hence the functions of the prophetess and the sibyl, of the enchanter, the interpreter of dreams, the diviner by offering-cups,[1] or the entrails of victims, or human sacrifices. Hence the raisers of storms, the Runic sticks, and all the usual instruments of heathenism for exploring the secrets either of the past or the

[1] Comp. Gen. xliv. 5.

future. Upsal was the Teutonic Delphi, as famous for its oracles as for its sacrifices. Here might be found diviners, both male and female, who could supply runes to secure victory in the battle, to preserve from poison, to heal bodily infirmities, or to chase away melancholy.[1] Thus all nature had a voice which could speak, and to which all men were bound to hearken. The skies, the woods, the waters, were the Teuton's books, his oracles, his divinities.

But nature-worship did not satisfy. The Teuton ceased in time to quail before her mighty powers. He learnt to defy the wind and storm, the frost and cold. So nature-worship became entangled with a complicated system of human gods.

The first and eldest of the gods, we saw, was Allfadir, Odin, or Wotan. But in process of time the great Father was resolved into his attributes. His power was divided amongst a number of inferior divinities, sprung from himself, to each of whom he had imparted a portion of his greatness. Hence the twelve Æsir and the twelve Asynar. Moreover, as in the Hindu mythology, Brahm

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[1] The "Indiculus Superstitionum" and the Lives of the Mediæval Missionaries afford an insight into the various kinds of Teutonic sorcery. Comp. the letter of Boniface to Cuthbert, Ep. lxiii. ed. Migne, and the appendix to Kemble's "Saxons in England," vol. i.

is almost forgotten before Vishnu, or the more terrible Siva and Kali, so Odin shared the worship of his votaries with Thor the "Thunderer," the "chief of the gods in strength and might;" with Tyr, the Teutonic Mars, the "bravest of all the gods, the giver of victory, and god of battle;" with Freyr, the god of fertility, of seed-time and harvest, of marriage and fruitfulness; with Baldr, fairest of all the sons of Odin, the Phœbus Apollo of the Teuton, "the restorer of peace, the maker-up of quarrels;" while Frigga, Odin's wife, presided over the sweet spring-time and the rising seed, with her attendants, Fulla, "plenty," Hlin, "warmth," and Gna, "the sweet and gentle breeze."

The Æsir and the Asyniar were the blithe, beneficent powers. But the Teuton could not look out upon the natural world, without tracing in its contradictory phenomena the operation of other powers, dark and sinister, which had brought about a convulsion in high places, and with whose machinations the human race had become entangled. Hence the belief in monstrous fiends and giants, cruel, powerful, and inexorable. Chief of these was Loki, the "calumniator and backbiter of the gods," "the grand contriver of deceit and fraud." In his form he was fairer than any of human mould, but his mind was evil, his nature feeble, and "he cheated in all things, and in the arts of perfidy and craft

he had no equal." Once the friend and associate of the Æsir, united with them in sacred brotherhood, he fell like Lucifer from his high estate, and terrible was his threefold offspring,—the first, Fenris-wolf; the second, Midgard's worm; the third, a daughter, Hel, the goddess of death. These are the enemies of the Æsir, the authors of disquiet and strife, and with their entrance into the Teutonic and Scandinavian mythology the older and milder religion assumed a more warlike and savage character. Instead of ruling the world in peace, the "Father of gods and men" became Valfadir, the god of battles, the "terrible and severe god," who prepared for the warrior the feast in Valhalla.[1]

Such, roughly and briefly, were the outlines of the Teuton's creed, to which everywhere and at all times he clung, and for which he died, for it was "the transfiguration of the natural man, with all his virtues and vices, with all his feelings, and passions, and natural affections."[2] Hence the free and easy way in which the Teuton regarded his gods. If he honoured them right, and offered the due sacrifices, he claimed his reward. If he considered himself unfairly treated, he openly reproved them, forsook their worship, and destroyed their temples.

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[1] See Dasent's "Norsemen in Iceland," p. 191; "Prose Edda," p. 446.

[2] Dasent's "Burnt Njal," I. xvii.

For though it may be true that in early times the Teuton knew nothing of temples made with hands, that the Deity, whom no enclosure could contain, or mortal form represent, received the adoration of his worshippers in the obscurity of the wood, or on the lonely mountain-top, yet without doubt the introduction of an elaborate form of polytheism brought with it in time a more elaborate form of external worship.

The transition from the sacred oak-grove to the hill altar and the cairn was easy. Equally easy the transition thence to the temple of wood, with its nave and shrine, its "holy place," and its "holy of holies." In the Norse temples, formed doubtless on a plan common in earlier times, the images of the gods stood on a platform in a shrine. In front of them was the altar, on which burnt the holy fire. On it, too, was laid the great ring, which, stained with the sacred blood, was placed in the hand of all such as were about to take any solemn oath. Hard by also was the brazen vessel, in which the blood of the slaughtered victims was caught, and the brush or twig wherewith the worshippers were sprinkled, while they stood behind a partition-wall opposite the platform of the gods, and from this outer court beheld the ceremonies.

The temple of Upsal, the Teutonic Delphi, was in circumference not less than nine hun-

dred ells, and glittered on all sides with gold. In it Odin was represented with a sword in his hand, while on his left stood Thor, with the insignia of a crown, a sceptre, and a hammer, and on his right Freyja, an hermaphrodite, with many emblems characteristic of productiveness. Near Eresburg, on the Drimel, stood, till the times of Charlemagne, the celebrated Teutonic idol, called the Irmin-Saule.[1] On a high stone column rose the figure of a gigantic warrior, girt with a sword, holding in his right hand a banner, on which was painted a bright red rose, in his left hand a balance. The crest of the warrior's helmet was a cock; on his breast was figured a bear; on the shield was the representation of a lion in a field full of flowers. The image itself was eleven feet in height, and of a light red colour. Its base was of rude stone, surrounded with belts of orichalcum, of which the upper and lower were gilded. It was the largest idol of all Saxony, and pictures of it were suspended in other temples, and its priests enjoyed a high reputation. It was believed to be able to aid the warrior in the din of battle, who oftentimes rode round it, and murmured to it his prayers. Sometimes it was borne into the field and when the conflict was over, all the prisoners,

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[1] Meibomius, "De Irminsula;" Adam Brem. i. 6; Akerman's "Pagan Saxondom," p. xxi,

and all who had disgraced themselves by cowardice, were immolated at its feet.[1]

The offerings presented in these temples consisted of all living things—sheep, oxen, swine, and especially horses. The latter sacrifice was particularly characteristic of the Germanic races. The victims having been slaughtered before the images of the gods, the heads were by preference offered to them, and with the hides were fixed or hung on trees in the sacred groves. The blood was caught in the blood-bowl, and sprinkled with the blood-twig on the altar, the images, and the people, while the fat was used for anointing the images themselves, which were afterwards rubbed dry. The flesh was boiled down in caldrons over fires placed along the whole length of the nave. Round these the worshippers took their seats, and ate the flesh and partook of the broth, while the chief to whom the temple belonged blessed the cups of mead or beer in honour of Odin, Freyr, Thor, Frigga, and, last, of departed friends. Then the rest in order took the cup, and each made his prayer or offered his vow; and so the feast went on, terminating too often in riot and drunkenness.

Such were the usual sacrifices. On great occasions, however, human victims were offered, especially slaves, criminals, and cap-

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[1] See Dasent's "Burnt Njal," I. xxxix.

tives This custom was common to all the Germanic races. But at Upsal the ninth month in each year—and every ninth year appear to have been specially set apart for these sacrifices. On such occasions, the presence of the king, together with all citizens of importance, was deemed absolutely essential. Human victims appear to have been offered either as sacrifices of atonement, or to appease the wrath of malign deities, or as propitiatory sacrifices to the dead in the nether world.[1] In seasons of more than ordinary calamity, the king himself was expected to lay down his life. Thus, on the occasion of a great dearth, the first king of Vermaland, in Sweden, was burnt in honour of Odin. Again, in a great sea-fight with the Jomsburg pirates, the jarl Hakon offered up his son to obtain the victory ; and Aun, another king of Sweden, immolated at the shrine of Odin nine of his sons, in order that his own life might be prolonged.

3. But it is now time to glance at the third group of nations, the Sclavonic.

On a map of Europe in the beginning of the sixth century we find the Sclaves represented as forming three principal branches, or aggregates of tribes. Towards the east, resting on the Euxine, and extending from the Dniester to the Dnieper and the Don, are the Antes, the progenitors of the great Russian people. To-

[1] See Bartholini's "Antiq. Danicæ," pp. 388–396 ; Adam Brem. "Gesta PP. Hammaburg," iv. 26.

wards the west, resting on the Baltic, are the Venedi, or Wends. Between the two intervene the Slavenes, a nomad race blending sometimes with the eastern, sometimes with the western branch.

The first coming of the Sclaves was peaceful. They occupied quietly such lands as their Teutonic brethren left them, and thence pushed forward to the south and west, building trading cities like Kieff and Novgorod and Arcona, sinking mines in Germany, smelting and casting metals, preparing salt, and planting fruit-trees, leading a quiet and contented life.

Early writers uniformly speak of them in favorable terms. Procopius describes them as free from malice and fraud, generous and hospitable. Adam of Bremen extols their kindness and courtesy towards strangers.[1] But they became at an early period the victims of unparalleled oppressions, and the consequences could be traced with terrible clearness in the change which their national character underwent. Under the iron heel of the Germans on the north, of the Turks on the south, and afterwards of the Mongols on the east, their veracity and good faith were exchanged for duplicity and cunning. At first they displayed all the characteristics of the pastoral tribe. Living in huts of rough timber in the depths

[1] "Hist. Eccles." ii. 12; and compare the letter of Boniface to Ethelbald, Ep. lxii. ed. Migne.

of forests, or along the banks of rivers, they tended their numerous flocks of sheep and cattle, defending themselves in time of war with nothing but a shield for a weapon of defence, and for offence a bow and a quiver of poisoned arrows or the lasso. But after centuries of oppression they became demoralized and debased. Submissive in adversity, they were tyrants in their hour of power, and obtained a notoriety for cruelties practised only amongst the most savage natons.

Procopius sketches the chief features of their religious system. "The Sclavonians," he says, "worship one god, the 'Maker of the Thunder,' whom they hold to be the only lord of the universe, and to whom they offer cattle and different kinds of victims. They do not believe in fate, or that it has any power over mortals. Whenever they are in danger of death, either from illness or from the enemy, they make vows to God to offer sacrifices if they should be saved. When the peril is over, they fulfil their vows, and believe that it was this which saved them. They also worship rivers, nymphs, and some other deities, to whom they offer sacrifices, making divinations at the same time."[1]

Later writers give us further particulars, from which it would appear that the Sclavonic religion was marked on the one hand by the

[1] Procopius, "De Bello Gothico."

worship of the gladdening, fructifying powers of nature, and on the other by the deprecation of dark and sinister powers, who manifested their malignant arts by creating discord, sickness, and death. The first was symbolized by Lada, the goddess of love and pleasure; Kupala, the god of the fruits of the earth; Koleda, the god of festivals, who delighted in offerings of fruits, and rejoiced in songs and dances round lighted fires. Of the second, the chief was Zernabog, "the black deity," whose name recalls the Matchi Manito of the Mexicans, and who, like the latter, was approached with fear and horror, and propitiated with human sacrifices.

The Lord of Thunder was worshipped at Kieff and Novgorod under the name of Peroun, and in Moravia his idol was of wood, with the head of silver. At Rugen were the images of Porenut, "the god of the seasons," with four faces and a fifth on his breast; and of Rhugevit, "the god of war," with seven faces, and seven swords suspended at his side and an eighth in his hand.

At Romove, in Prussia, as late even as the year A.D. 1230, three gods were especially worshipped; Percunos, "the god of thunder," Potrimpos, "the god of corn and fruits," Picullos, "the god of the infernal regions." The face of the first was expressive of extreme anger, his head being wreathed with a crown of flames; the second was represented by a

beardless youth, and wore a chaplet of green leaves and ears of corn; the face of the third was pale, the beard snow-white, the eyes looking downwards on the ground.

But the most famous idol, at least of the Baltic Sclavonians, was Sviantovit, or Swantevit. His temple was at Arcona, the capital of the island of Rugen, and was not destroyed till the year A.D. 1168. A Danish historian[1] informs us that the temple, which was of wood and beautifully constructed, rose from a level spot in the midst of the town. It had two enclosures. The outer consisted of a wall with a roof painted red; the interior was hung with tapestry and ornamented with paintings.

The idol, which stood in the sanctuary, was of gigantic size, with four heads and as many necks, two chests, and two backs, one turned to the right, the other to the left. In his right hand the god held a horn made of various metals, which was once a year filled with mead by the attendant priest. His left arm was bent towards his side in the form of a bow. He was arrayed in a long flowing robe reaching down to the feet, while around him lay his bridle, and a sword of enormous size with a beautiful hilt and scabbard.

The worship of the idol was defrayed by an annual tax, payable by every inhabitant of the

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[1] Saxon Grammaticus, "Hist. Danicæ," lib. xiv.; compare also Herbordi "Vita Ottonis," ii. 31; Pertz, "Mon. Germ." xii. 794.

island, by a third of the spoils taken in war, and by the numerous votive offerings sent to the temple by neighbouring chiefs A regiment of three hundred chosen cavalry was specially dedicated to his service, who went forth to fight in his name, and brought back the booty, which the priest made up into various ornaments for the shrine.

The god himself was believed to accompany his votaries to the battle-field on a white horse, which specially belonged to him. It was a sin to pull a hair from his mane or tail, and the priest alone might feed or mount him This horse was especially consulted on going forth to war, for it was believed to be able to reveal the secrets of the future. When the tribe wished to declare war, three rows of spears were laid down before the temple, solemn prayers were then offered up, and the horse was led forth by the priest. If, in passing over these spears, he lifted his right foot first, then the war would be prosperous; if the left, or both together, it was a fatal omen, and the expedition was given up.

The most solemn festival was after harvest. On this occasion the people of Rugen assembled, offered sacrifices of cattle, and held a solemn feast. The priest, conspicuous for his long hair and beard, first carefully swept the sanctuary, holding his breath lest the divine presence should be defiled, and if he wished to respire, retiring into the open air. On the

morning of the festival he brought forth to the assembled people the sacred mead-cup, which he took from the idol's hand. If the mead had decreased therein, he announced the fact to the worshippers, and bade them beware of scarcity; if it had increased, it was an omen of abundance. The old liquor was then poured forth as a libation at the foot of the idol, and the priest, refilling it, engaged in solemn supplication for the people, that they might be prosperous and have victory in war. He then emptied the horn at a single draught, and once more refilling it, placed it in the right hand of the idol, where it remained till the next year.

Round cakes of flour and honey were then offered, and the priest concluded the ceremony by blessing the people in the name of the god, exhorting them to frequent sacrifice, and promising them, as their reward, victory both by sea and land. The rest of the day was spent in feasting on the remains of the offerings, and the people were taught that on this occasion intemperance was a virtue, sobriety a sin.[1]

Such is the account given by a contemporary writer of this celebrated Sclavonic idol; and it gives us a very vivid idea of Sclavonic worship as it was observed as late even as the middle of the twelfth century. The belief in fairies and sprites, in water-nymphs and wood-

[1] "Historiæ Danicæ," lib. xiv.

nymphs, in sorcery and magic, was as active amongst the Sclavonians as amongst their Teutonic brethren, while the respect paid by them to their priests, who united civil and religious functions, was as submissive as that of the Celt to his Druid teacher.

CHAPTER II.

ST. PATRICK.

With this sketch of the religious systems of the three great groups of nations now presented to the missionary zeal of the Christian Church, we pass on to describe the lives and labours of some of those who devoted themselves to the work of communicating to them the word of life.

We might have expected that it would be necessary to begin with those who went forth from the long-established churches of the Continent. But it is not so. It is true that instances are not wanting of men who left these churches to evangelize the heathen tribes around them: that Ulphilas laboured with no little success amongst the Goths of Mæsia; that the great Chrysostom founded in Constantinople an institution in which Goths might be trained and educated to preach the Gospel to their fellow-countrymen;[1] that Valentinus won for himself the title of "the apostle of

[1] Theodoret, "H. E." v. 30.

Noricum;"[1] that his work was carried on with signal success by Severinus;[2] that, after the conversion of Clovis and the foundation of the Frankish Church, Avitus of Vienne, Cæsarius of Arles, and Faustus of Riez, proved what might be done by energy and self-devotion among the masses of heathendom.

But the Frankish Church was not destined to evangelize the rude nations of Europe. The internal dissensions, the constant wars, among the successors of Clovis, were not favourable either to the development of Christianity in their own dominions or its propagation abroad. The rapid accession of wealth more and more tempted the Frankish bishops to live as mere laymen, and the light of their Church grew dim. Not only were the heathen lying around neglected, but within her own territory the Frankish Church saw her own members relapsing in some instances into the old idolatries.

A new influence, therefore, was required if this light was to be rekindled, and the nations of Europe evangelized. And this new influence the providence of God supplied. But to trace its origin we must leave the Continent of Europe for an island high up in the Northern Sea, which the Roman Agricola had once dreamt of invading and holding with a single

[1] See Surius, "Acta SS." Aug. 4.

[2] See "The Hermits," by Professor Kingsley, pp. 224–246.

legion,[1] but where the imperial proconsuls and prætors had never landed, and which was now almost forgotten amidst the breaking up of the Roman empire In short, we must begin with the great apostle of Ireland, St. Patrick.

The original name of St. Patrick was *Succat*, which is said to signify "strong in war." Patricius appears to have been his Roman name. He was born of Christian parents at some period between A.D. 395 and A.D. 415. His father Calphurnius was a deacon, his grandfather Potitus a priest. Though an ecclesiastic, Calphurnius would seem to have held the rank of decurion,[2] and may therefore have been of Roman or provincial British extraction. His birthplace was a spot which he himself calls Bonavem Taberniæ, and which in all probability may be identified with the modern Kirkpatrick, between Dumbarton and Glasgow.

The parents of Succat, as has been already said, were Christians, and it would seem that the Gospel had been preached to some extent in the neighbourhood of his father's home. Whatever amount, however, of instruction he may have received was rudely interrupted, when he was about sixteen years of age.

The coasts of Scotland were at this time exposed to the frequent incursions of Irish chief-

[1] Taciti "Vita Agricolæ," ch. xxiv.

[2] "S. Patricii Ep. ad Coroticum;" Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," p. 354.

tains, who landed in their swift barks, ravaged the country, and having carried off as many of the inhabitants as they could, consigned them to slavery. In one of these expeditions the house of Calphurnius was attacked, and Succat, with two of his sisters and many of his countrymen, was carried away, and conveyed to the north of Ireland.

Here he was purchased as a slave by Michul or Milchu, a chief of North Dalaradia, who dwelt in the valley of the Braid, near Mount Slemish, in the county of Antrim. The work assigned him was that of attending his master's flocks and herds, and in his "Confession," which he wrote towards the close of his life, he describes how he wandered over the bleak mountains, often drenched with the rains, and numbed with the frosts. His period of servitude lasted six years; and during this time he would seem to have made himself acquainted with the language of the native tribes, and to have learnt their habits and modes of life. At length he succeeded in effecting his escape to the sea-side, where he took ship and after a tempestuous passage, regained his father's house. His stay, however, was destined to be very short. In a predatory excursion he was a second time taken captive, and again, after a brief interval, succeeded in making his escape.[1]

[1] This second captivity, however, appears somewhat doubtful. See Todd's "Life of St. Patrick." pp. 375. 376.

Had he listened to his parents, he would now have remained with them, but he was bent on a very different occupation. "The Divine Voice," he says, "frequently admonished me to consider whence I derived the wisdom which was in me, who once knew neither the number of my days nor was acquainted with God; and whence I obtained afterwards so great and salutary a gift as to know and to love God." During the weary hours, moreover, of his captivity, he had often reflected how blessed a thing it would be if he, to whom it had been given to know the true God and his Son Jesus Christ, could carry the glad tidings to his master's people and the land of his exile.

One night, he tells us, he had a dream, in which he thought he saw a man coming from Ireland with a number of letters. One of these he gave him to read, and in the beginning occurred the words, "The voice of the Irish." While he was reading it, he thought he heard a voice calling to him across the Western Sea, "We entreat thee, holy youth, to come and walk among us."

Obedient, therefore, to what he deemed to be a plain leading from heaven, and resisting the arguments and entreaties of relatives and friends, who mocked at his enthusiastic resolve, he set out for the monasteries of southern France, there to prepare himself for the work of preaching the Gospel in the land of his captivity. Amidst the conflicting legends

which now follow him at every step, it seems probable that he repaired to the monastic schools of Tours, Auxerre, and Lerins, where he studied, and was employed for some little time in pastoral duties, having been ordained successively deacon and priest.

There, too, he would seem to have been elevated to the episcopate, and thence with a band of fellow-labourers he set sail for Ireland, about the middle of the fifth century. Landing on one of the islands off the coast of Dublin, he and his companions tried unsuccessfully to obtain provisions, which they greatly needed. Thence sailing northwards, they put in at a strait called Brene, and after landing at the south-western extremity of Strangford Lough,[1] advanced some considerable way into the interior.

They had not gone far before they encountered a native chief named Dichu, at the head of a band of men. Mistaking St. Patrick for the leader of one of the many pirate crews, which at that time often appeared upon the coast, he was on the point of putting him to death. But struck by the missionary's appearance, and seeing that both he and his companions were unarmed, he hospitably received them into his house. In frequent interviews he now heard the doctrines of the faith, and after a time was baptized, with all his

[1] Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," pp. 406, 407.

family. According to some authorities, he also bestowed upon his instructor the ground whereon his barn was built; and here arose the celebrated church called *Sabhall Patraic*, "The Barn of Patrick," which still retains the name of Sabhal, or Saul, and is situated about two miles north-east of Downpatrick

Leaving Saul, the missionaries proceeded to northern Dalaradia, and the residence of St. Patrick's old master, Milchu. But nothing would induce the old chief to receive one who had been once his slave, or to forsake the paganism of his forefathers. His journey thus ineffectual, St. Patrick returned to the district where Dichu resided, and made the neighbourhood for some time his head-quarters.

Thence proceeding southward, he determined to visit the central parts of the island, and especially the famous hill of Tara, where King Laoghaire was about to hold a great religious festival in the presence of all his tributary chieftains, Druids, and bards. In this stronghold of Druidism he resolved to celebrate the approaching festival of Easter, and preach the word to the assembled chiefs. It was Easter Eve, we are told, when he reached the neighbourhood of Tara, and having erected a tent, he made preparations for spending the night with his companions, and kindled a fire for the purpose of preparing food. As the smoke curled upwards in the evening air, it was observed by the Druids in

the king's tents, and caused the greatest consternation To kindle any fire during the solemn assembly of the chiefs, before the king had lighted the sacred flame in the palace of Tara, was a sin of the greatest enormity, and the Druids did not scruple to warn the king that if the fire of the stranger was not extinguished that night, unto him, whose fire it was, would belong the sovereignty of Ireland for ever

Messengers were accordingly sent to discover the authors of the sacrilege, and to order them to appear before Laoghaire. The missionaries went, and their fearlessness when in the presence of the monarch and his nobles won for them a respectful hearing. On the following day St. Patrick again addressed the chiefs, doubtless in their own language, and proclaimed to them the doctrines of the faith. Laoghaire himself, indeed, did not profess to be a convert, but he gave permission to the man of God to preach the word on condition that he did not disturb the peace of the kingdom. During the ensuing week, therefore, when the great public games were celebrated at Tailten, the missionary and his companions addressed themselves to the youngest brother of the king, and were so favourably received that he professed himself a believer, submitted to baptism, and is said to have given the site of a church, called afterwards "The Great Church of Patrick."

The impression thus made upon the chiefs was soon shared by their subjects, and though the pagan party made frequent attempts to put the missionaries to death, from which they narrowly escaped, they were heartily received in Westmeath, Connaught, Mayo, and Ulster, and before long found themselves strong enough to destroy the great idol Crom-cruach, on the plain of Magh Slecht,[1] in the county of Cavan, and, in the district of the clan Amalgaidh, admitted to baptism the seven sons of the king and many of their people.

To the worshippers of the powers of nature, and especially the sun and other heavenly bodies, St. Patrick proclaimed that the great luminary which ruled the day had no self-originated existence, but was created by One, whom he taught them to call God the Father. "Beside him," said he, "there is no other god, nor ever was, nor will be. He was in the beginning before all things, and from him all things are derived, visible and invisible." He told them next of "his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, who had become man, had conquered death and ascended into heaven, where he sat far above all principalities and powers, and whence he would hereafter come to judge both the quick and the dead, and reward every man according to his deeds."

[1] See O'Curry's Lectures p. 103; O'Donovan's "Tribes and Customs of Hy-Fiachrach," p. 310 *n*, and the Addenda.

"Those," he declared, "who believed in him, would rise again in the glory of the true Sun, that is, in the glory of Jesus Christ, being by redemption sons of God and joint-heirs of the Christ, of whom, and by whom, and to whom, are all things; for the true Sun, Jesus Christ, will never wane nor set, nor will any perish who do his will, but they shall live for ever, even as he liveth for ever with God the Father Almighty, and the Holy Spirit, world without end." [1]

Such, as it would seem from his "Confession," was the Gospel he proclaimed, and his words, confirmed and illustrated by his own intrepid zeal, ardent love, and sincere and devoted life, made a deep impression on the minds of the Celtic chiefs. With the religious enthusiasm deeply seated in the primitive Celtic character, which many years before won for St. Paul so warm a reception in Galatia,[2] their hearts were touched, and they welcomed the missionary and believed the word which he preached.

As time went on, the labours of St. Patrick were lightened by the arrival of the bishops Secundinus, Auxilius, and Isserninus, whom he had sent either to France or Britain to receive consecration. Their coming enabled him to extend the sphere of his operations,

[1] See "S. Patricii Confessio," O'Connor, "Script. Hibern." vol. i. pp. cvi. cxvii.

[2] Gal. iv. 13–15.

and he undertook missionary tours in Meath, Leinster, Ossory, and Munster. These continued for several years, during which he was occupied in preaching the word, baptizing new converts, and erecting churches. Knowing well how much his own acquaintance with the native language had contributed to his success, he laboured diligently to establish a native ministry wherever he went. Cautiously selecting from the higher classes those whose piety and intelligence seemed to fit them for the work of the ministry, he established seminaries and monastic schools, where they were trained and educated; and to these schools the young of both sexes flocked with extraordinary eagerness.

While he was labouring in the southeastern part of Munster, a petty prince of Cardiganshire, named Coroticus, though apparently professing Christianity, set out from Wales, and descending on the Irish coast with a band of armed followers, murdered several of the people, and carried off a large number with the intention of disposing of them as slaves. This outrage, perpetrated in one of the districts where St. Patrick was baptizing, roused his keenest indignation, and he wrote a letter, which he sent by one of his companions, calling upon Coroticus to restore the captives, many of whom had been baptized. But his request being treated with contempt and scorn, he composed another circular epistle, in which

he inveighed in the strongest terms against the cruelty of the marauding tribe and its chief. He contrasted his conduct with that of the Christians of the Continent, who were in the habit of sending large sums of money to ransom captives, and concluded by threatening him and his followers with excommunication, unless he desisted in future from his piratical habits. What was the result of the epistle is not known, but it is to be feared that the attempt to recover the captives was not successful. Slavery and the trade in slaves was almost more difficult to root out than paganism, and the inhuman traffic was in full activity as late as the tenth century between England and Ireland, and the port of Bristol was one of its principal centres.

Meanwhile, after a somewhat lengthened sojourn in the district of Lowth and parts of Ulster, St. Patrick reached the district of Macha, containing the royal city of Emania, the residence of the kings of Ulster, the remains of which, under the name of the Navan, still exist about two miles west of Armagh. Here he was cordially received by Daire, a wealthy chief, who made over to him a pleasant piece of ground on an eminence, *Druim-sailch* or "Hill of the Willows." The spot pleased St. Patrick, and here he determined to erect a church. The foundations were accordingly laid, and around it rose by degrees the city of Armagh, the ecclesiastical metrop-

olis of Ireland; and here its founder spent the remainder of his life, only leaving it now and then to visit his favourite retreat at Saul, round which clustered so many associations of his earliest labours, and of his first convert Dichu.

Here, too, having called to his aid the bishops Secundinus, Isserninus, and Auxilius, who next to himself were best qualified by long experience for the work, he proceeded to hold synods and to make regulations for the general government of the churches he had founded. Again and again he was solicited to revisit his friends and relatives in Scotland, but nothing could induce him to leave his post. In his "Confession," written when far advanced in years, he touchingly describes how often he had been requested to come amongst his kinsmen once more, but how a deep sense of the spiritual love between himself and his flock ever retained him in Ireland.

It was while he was staying at Saul that the apostle of Ireland was seized with his last illness. He had lived to a good old age, and the sunset of his life was calm and peaceful. Perceiving that his end drew nigh, and desirous, as we are told, that Armagh should be the resting-place of his remains, he set out thither, but was unable to continue the journey. Increasing weakness, and, as it seemed to him, the voice of an angel,

bade him return to the church of his first convert; and there he closed his eyes in death, probably in the year A.D. 493,[1] leaving behind him the visible memorials of a noble work nobly done. He and his fellow-labourers had made for themselves by the labours of their own hands civilized dwellings amidst the tangled forest and dreary morass. At a time when clan-feuds and bloodshed were rife, and princes rose and fell, and all was stormy and changeful, they had covered the island with monastic schools, where the Scriptures were studied, ancient books collected and read, and native missionaries trained for their own country, and for the remotest parts of the European continent.

CHAPTER III.

COLUMBANUS AND GALLUS.

AND now that we have watched the rise of the Celtic churches in Ireland, we shall see how they poured back with interest the gifts of civilization and Christianity on the Continent of Europe. Blending the ardour of Christian enthusiasm with an inextinguishable love of travelling and adventure, they now began to search out the most rugged fields of labour amongst the most barbarous tribes of Switzerland and Germany.

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[1] See Todd's "Life of St. Patrick," p. 497.

The outward appearance of these Celtic missionaries must have been very striking. Travelling generally in companies—the Irish tonsure high on their shaven heads, their long locks flowing behind, their outfit a pastoral staff, a leathern water-bottle, a wallet, a leathern case for their service-books, another containing relics—they flocked across the sea, landed on the western shores of France, and, after paying their devotions at some shrine, generally that of St. Martin at Tours, pressed on to some forest, and there—all obedient to one man, all, as they styled themselves, "soldiers of Christ"—they settled down, and by dint of great labour cleared some portion of the waste. Before long the wooden huts arose, with the little chapel and round tower or steeple by its side, with the abbot's chamber, the refectory, the kitchen, the barn for the grain, and other buildings; and here they lived, and prayed, and studied, tilling the waste, preaching the word, healing the sick, comforting the afflicted, and teaching the heathen tribes a "more excellent way" than the cruel worship of Odin and Thor.

One of the earliest and most eminent of these Celtic missionaries must now engage our attention.

Two years before St. Columba sailed for his island home in Iona, Columbanus was born in Leinster, of noble parents, and was placed at a very early age under the venerable Senile,

abbot of Cluain-inis, in Lough Erne. Under this able teacher his studies embraced—besides the Holy Scriptures—grammar, rhetoric, and geometry; and his rapid progress was attested by a commentary on the Psalms, which he composed at an early age, besides other religious works. Resolved on embracing the monastic state, he left Cluain-inis for the great monastery of Banchor, on the coast of Ulster, and submitted himself to the discipline of the eminent abbot, St. Comgall. But he could not make up his mind to stay at Banchor. Seized with the yearning after foreign travel which seemed to have taken so many of his countrymen by storm, and eagerly desirous to preach the Gospel to the pagan tribes on the Continent of Europe, he acquainted the abbot with his resolve to leave his own country and his father's house, and labour abroad. In vain St. Comgall remonstrated. Columbanus remained firm, and, at the age of thirty, having selected twelve companions from amongst the brethren,[1] he bade farewell to Ireland, and, after barely touching on the shores of Britain, landed in France in the year A.D. 580.

He found the kingdom of the Franks Christian indeed, but only in name, distracted with furious wars, and neglected by its own bishops. After traversing the country for some time and preaching the word, he arrived

[1] See "Vita S. Galli;" Pertz, "Mon. Germ." vol. ii. p. 47.

in Burgundy, where he was eagerly welcomed by Guntram, the least blameworthy of the grandsons of Clovis. Here he might have found a secure retreat and a sphere of useful labour; but his ascetic spirit longed for a sterner mission field. On the confines of the kingdoms of Austrasia and Burgundy rose the wild and desolate range of the Vosges, and tribes of pagan Suevians roamed over districts once colonized by the Roman legionaries. Here he determined to take up his abode; and with his twelve companions first settled down amidst the ruins of the ancient Roman castle of Anegray. Here and at Luxeuil, where the speedily increasing number of his disciples forced him to lay the foundations of another monastery, were charms for the severest ascetic.

"Over a range of sixty leagues, and a breadth of ten or fifteen, nothing was to be seen but parallel chains of inaccessible defiles, divided by endless forests, whose bristling pine-woods descended from the peaks of the highest mountains to overshadow the course of the rapid and pure streams of the Doubs, the Dessoubre, and Loue."[1] War and devastation had well-nigh effaced every trace of Roman colonists. What their industry had cultivated the sword of the barbarous invaders, and especially of Attila, had restored to solitude,

[1] Montalembert's "Monks of the West," vol. ii. pp. 403, 404.

and made once more the haunt of the bear, the bison, and the wolf.

No spot could have been found more suited to the spirit of Columbanus. Nowhere could he and his companions better learn to practise self-denial and inure themselves to the severest hardships. Before long, at Anegray and Luxeuil, monasteries arose amidst the waste, on the model of those Columba had raised under the oaks of Derry. The boundaries of the monastic colony were duly marked out, and the forest cleared. Within these rose the humble cells of thatch and wattles, and conspicuously the church with the round tower, which could serve as a place of refuge in times of need. In fields reclaimed from desolation the seed was sown, and when the summer had mellowed the waving grain, the brethren reaped the golden harvest. The mysterious life of the strangers profoundly moved the hearts of Franks and heathen alike. Hundreds flocked to listen to their religious instructions; hnndreds more, encouraged by their labours in clearing and tilling the land, took to copying their example. At Anegray, at Luxeuil, at Fontenay, they beheld forests cleared, trees felled, and the lands ploughed by the same assiduous hands, all obedient to one head, who sometimes assisted in, and always encouraged, their labours.

A Rule severer than that of Benedict bound every member of the increasing fraternity.

Incessant toil, either in the field or in copying and illuminating manuscripts; the punctilious observance of repeated devotional exercises, three by day and three by night; the severest discipline, extending to every motion of the body, and regulating even the tone of the voice;—these and other methods were employed by the enthusiastic abbot in moulding to implicit obedience those who were admitted to his cloisters.

"Obedience" is the heading of the first chapter of his Rule, and the question, "What are the limits of obedience?" is answered, "Even unto death; for unto death Christ submitted himself to the Father for us." The life of the monastic brother is thus described:—"Let the monk live under the discipline of one father, and in the society of many—that from the one he may learn humility, from the other patience—from the one silence, from the other gentleness; let him never gratify his own wishes; let him eat whatever he is bidden; let him possess only what he receives; let him perform his allotted task with diligence; only when wearied out let him retire to bed; let him be compelled to rise before he has slept sufficiently; when he is injured, let him hold his peace; let him fear the head of the monastery as a master, and love him as a father; let him believe that whatever he orders is for his good, and obey him without question, seeing that he is called to obedience,

and to fulfil all that is right; let his fare be homely and sparing, sufficient to support life without weighing down the spirit—a little bread, vegetables, pulse, or flour mixed with water; let this be his diet, as becometh one who professeth to seek in heaven an eternal crown."

But the abbot was far from teaching his disciples that the essence of piety consisted in externals. Again and again he reminds them that true religion consists not in the outward humility of the body but of the heart. He himself ever set them a worthy example. At once practical and contemplative, he would work as hard as the best of them in clearing the waste, and then he would penetrate into the deepest recesses of the forest, there to read and meditate on the Scriptures, which he always carried with him. On Sundays and high festivals he abstracted himself even yet more from outward things. Seeking a cave, or some other secluded spot, he would devote himself entirely to prayer and meditation, and so prepare for celebrating the holy services of the day without distraction. "Whosoever overcomes himself," he was wont to say, "treads the world under foot. No one who spares himself can really hate the world. If Christ be truly in us, we cannot live to ourselves; if we have conquered ourselves, we have conquered all things. If the Creator of all things died for us, that he might redeem us from sin,

ought not we to die to sin? Let us die unto ourselves. Let us live in Christ, that Christ may live in us."

These quotations, and others to the same effect might be easily multiplied, express the innermost feelings of his heart, and the principles which he sought to instil into the Order he had founded, in superintending which he found constant occupation for upwards of twelve years.

But he was not without his sorrows and anxieties. Death carried off seventeen of the brethren, and the abbot buried them in a portion of the forest he had so lately cleared. Moreover, the severity of his life and his zeal for monastic discipline excited the bitter prejudices of the Frankish clergy, whose own lethargy and worldliness stood rebuked by his self-denial. The pertinacity also with which he clung to the customs he had learnt in Ireland, and especially the time for the observance of Easter, did not mend matters, and involved him in a correspondence with Pope Gregory the Great, in which, while expressing all due respect for his exalted position, he nevertheless stoutly asserted his independence, and declined to alter the traditions he had received.

Before long his adherence to his Irish customs induced several bishops of the Frankish Church to convene a synod and deliberate how they should act towards the intrepid mission-

ary. Hearing of their intention, he addressed them in a letter, wherein, after expressing his thankfulness that they had met on his account, and his wish that they would meet rather oftener, as the canons required, he referred them as regards the Easter question to his correspondence with Gregory, and assured them with pathetic dignity that he was not the author of these differences.

"I came as a stranger amongst you," he says, "in behalf of our common Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. In his name, I beseech you, let me live in peace and quiet, as I have lived for twelve years in these woods beside the bones of my seventeen departed brethren. Let France receive into her bosom all who, if they deserve it, will meet in one heaven. For we have one kingdom promised us, we have one hope of our calling in Christ, with whom we shall reign together if we suffer with him here on earth. Choose ye which rule ye will respecting Easter, remembering the words of the Apostle, *Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.*[1] But let us not quarrel with one another, lest our enemies, the Jews, heretics, and heathen, rejoice in our contention." Then he concludes, "Pray for us, my father, even as we, humble as we are, pray for you. Regard us not as strangers, for we are members together of one Body, whether we be

[1] 1 Thess. v. 21.

Gauls, or Britons, or Iberians, or to whatever nation we belong. Therefore let us all rejoice in the knowledge of the faith, and in the revelation of the Son of God, and let us strive earnestly to attain together *unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;*[1] in communion with him let us learn to love one another, and pray for one another, that with him we may together reign for evermore."

Thus with mingled firmness and pathos did the abbot plead with the Frankish prelates. But he was soon called to engage in a nobler strife, and to protest against the vices of the Burgundian court, at this time ruled by the notorious Brunehaut, who, expelled from the palace of Theodebert II., king of Austrasia, had taken up her abode with her younger son, Thierri. Thierri had given himself up to the unbridled indulgence of his lusts, and Brunehaut conniving at his licentiousness, opposed in every possible way the substitution of a lawful wife for his numerous concubines, and sought to gain a complete ascendency in his kingdom, and to rule him through his vices.

But the fame of the abbot of Luxeuil attracted Thierri, who was not without religious instincts, and he often visited the monastery. Columbanus did not neglect the opportunity thus afforded him. He solemnly reproved the

[1] Eph. iv. 13.

king for his disorderly life, and bade him leave the society of hismistresses for an alliance with a queen, who might bring him a legitimate heir. The young king promised amendment, but Brunehaut saw in a legitimate queen a deathblow to all her influence, and her rage against the abbot was unbounded; but she dared not treat him as Didier, bishop of Vienne, had been treated, who had paid with his life for boldly rebuking the king's incontinence. Shortly afterwards, whether at her request or of his own accord, the abbot visited the palace, and the queen-mother implored his blessing on Thierri's four illegitimate sons. "These bastards born in sin," was the uncompromising reply, "shall never wield the royal sceptre." Brunehaut, furious, bade the children retire, and from that day forward commenced a series of petty persecutions, cutting off supplies from the Irish monasteries, and stirring up jealousy between them and the neighbouring convents.

Thereupon the abbot determined to repair once more to the court, and to remonstrate with the king himself. It was sunset when he appeared before the palace, and on his arrival being announced, the king ordered a sumptuous supper to be prepared and sent out to him. "It is written," said the abbot, "that the Most High abhors the offerings of the wicked, who wickedly persecute the servants of God, and exclude them not only from their

own, but from the habitation of others." Thereupon, according to his biographer, the dishes in a marvellous fashion brake in pieces, and the wine and other viands were spilt upon the ground. Alarmed at the intelligence of what had occurred, Thierri again promised amendment, and Columbanus returned to Luxeuil. Shortly afterwards, however, hearing that the king had relapsed into his old habits, he indited a letter full of the severest rebukes, and threatening him with excommunication if he did not repent.

Brunehaut felt that her turn was now come. She inflamed the mind of the king against his stern monitor; she roused the nobles and courtiers, and appealing to the bishops, endeavored to rouse their jealousy against the strange monk. At last, stung to the quick, Thierri repaired to Luxeuil, and demanded a free entrance to the monastery for himself and his suite. Nothing daunted, the abbot forbade his advancing a step further. The king ventured as far as the refectory, but shrunk from proceeding beyond, so menacing were the other's words. "Thou thinkest," said he, with a sneer, "that I shall confer on thee a martyr's crown; I am not so utterly foolish as to gratify thy pride. But since it pleaseth thee to live apart from all other men, thou shalt go hence by the way that thou camest."[1]

[1] Jonæ "Vita S. Columbani," capp. xix. xx.

Columbanus refused to leave the monastery except by compulsion, whereupon he was forcibly taken and conducted to Besançon. But he managed to elude his guards, and made his way back to Luxeuil. Again he was taken, and with two or three of his companions was hurried to Auxerre, thence to Nevers, where he was placed on board a vessel and conveyed down the Loire to Orleans, and so to Nantes, where he was put on board a ship bound for Ireland. But a storm arose, and the vessel was driven back and left high and dry on the coast of Neustria, nor till the abbot and his companions had been put safely on shore did the waters return and float the ship out to sea.

Thus once more in France, Columbanus repaired to the court of Clotaire II., king of Neustria, who besought him to remain and hallow his realm with his presence. The abbot could be persuaded to stay only a few days at the court, and then, after advising the monarch about some political matters, requested a safe-conduct to the court of the Austrasian Theodebert. His request was granted, and he reached his destination in safety. The king of Austrasia received him with delight, but could not prevail upon him to remain more than a brief space in his dominions.

As he was now not far from Luxeuil, not a few of the brethren flocked around him once more, and rejoiced to see their revered abbot.

But pining for the solitude which had been so long denied him, he resolved to proclaim the faith among the pagan tribes bordering on the Austrasian confines, and embarking on the Rhine with a few followers, ascended the river as far as the lake of Zurich, and halted finally at Tuggen. Here the tribes of heathen Suevians roamed up and down the country, and are described as cruel and impious, offering sacrifice to idols, and addicted to augury and divination. One of the abbot's companions, an Irish monk named Callech, or Gallus,[1] set fire to their wooden temples, and flung their idols into the lake; while on another occasion Columbanus himself broke one of the vats whence the beer was to be drawn for a sacred festival in honour of Woden. These proceedings roused the wrath of the Suevians, and they drove the missionaries from their country. Shaking off the dust from their feet, and invoking terrible maledictions on the natives, Columbanus and his companions left for Zug, and thence shaped their course to Arbon, a small town situated about midway along the south bank of the lake of Constance.

Here they found traces of Christianity planted under the Roman or Frankish govern-

[1] The practice of Latinizing the Irish names of these early missionaries was very common. Thus, *Fergal* was called Virgilius; *Siadhail*, Sedulius; *Cathal*, Cataldus; *Donnchadh*, Donatus; *Comgall*, Faustus. See "Ulster Archæol. Journal," vol. vii, p. 242.

ment, and a priest named Willimar received them with much cordiality. Seven days were spent in pleasant intercourse, and in reply to the inquiries of his visitors Willimar pointed out Bregenz, at the south-eastern extremity of the lake, as well adapted for a centre of missionary activity. A boat was manned by the friendly priest, and Columbanus and his companions made for the spot, and found it well suited for their purpose. Bregenz occupied the site of an ancient Roman camp, and contained the ruins of a church originally dedicated to St. Aurelius. Within the ruins, however, the missionaries found three images of brass gilded, fixed to the wall, which the people were wont to worship as the presiding deities of the place, and to invoke as their protectors.

These strange gods Columbanus resolved to remove, and availing himself of a festival, when great numbers resorted to Bregenz from the country round, he directed Gallus, who was acquainted with the native language, to address the people on the foolishness of their idolatry, and to persuade them to embrace a true faith. His companion complied with his request, and in the presence of a vast multitude proceeded to reason with them on the absurdities of the heathen errors, and to proclaim to them the one living and true God and his Son Jesus Christ. Then taking the idols, he broke them in pieces, and flung them into the lake, while Columbanus sprinkled the

church with holy water, and cleansed it of the taint of idolatry. The people were divided: some seeing the inability of their gods to help themselves, approved the boldness of the abbot, and were baptized; others went away filled with anger and bent on revenge.

In spite, however, of the exasperation of the greater proportion of the inhabitants, Columbanus and his little colony remained there upwards of three years, erected a monastery, and cleared a portion of the forest. At first their hardships were very great, and Gallus provided for the wants of the community by making nets and fishing on the lake, which to this day abounds with many varieties of fish.

One night, we are told, while he was thus engaged, he overheard the Spirit of the Mountain call to the Spirit of the Waters, "Arise and hasten to my assistance! Behold, strangers have come and driven me from my temple. Hasten to my aid, and help me to expel them from the land!" To whom replied the Spirit of the Waters, "Lo! even now one of them is busy on my surface, but I cannot injure him. Oftentimes have I desired to break his nets, but as often have I been baffled by the invocation of an all-prevailing Name, which never fails to cross his lips. Thus defended, he always despises my snares." Gallus shuddered at this unearthly dialogue, but quickly crossing himself, addressed the spirits, "I adjure you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that

ye depart from this place, and never venture to injure any one any more." He then hastily made for the shore, and recounted to the abbot what he had heard, who rejoiced at this manifest proof that even the spirits were subject unto the brethren.

Human hostility, however, they found not so easy to overcome. The heathen party roused against them one of the native chieftains, and Columbanus resolved to leave the neighbourhood. At first he thought of going to labour among the Sclavic and Wendish tribes who bordered on the Germanic nations, but forbidden by a dream to undertake this mission, he took with him a single disciple named Attalus, and crossing the Alps, repaired to the court of Agilulf, king of the Lombards, who with his queen, Theodelinda, welcomed him with the utmost cordiality. Agilulf bestowed upon him the territory of Bobbio, situated in a defile of the Apennines, between Genoa and Milan. Here were the ruins of a church dedicated to St. Peter, which Columbanus restored, and with the aid of companions, who quickly joined him, added to it the famous monastery of Bobbio.[1] Here also he welcomed

[1] This monastery existed as late even as the year 1803. Its valuable library preserved not only Cicero's treatise "De Republica," but an Irish antiphonarium of the eighth century and an early Irish missal. The name of its founder still survives in St. Columbano, near Lodi.

several of the brethren from Luxeuil, who, with the abbot Eustacius at their head, came on an embassy from Clotaire II., now sole king of the Franks, and master of Austrasia, Burgundy, and Neustria, begging him to return to the scene of his early labours. This, however, Columbanus declined to do, and spent the remaining years of his life in his new monastery, and died at the ripe age of seventy-two, November 21, A.D. 615.

Meanwhile his companion Callech, better known as Gallus or St. Gall, prevented by a severe attack of fever from accompanying his master across the Alps, remained behind at Bregenz. On his recovery he sought out his old friend Willimar at Arbon, and in his society, and that of two of the Luxeuil brethren, Magnoald and Theodore, found ample employment for his boat and nets on the waters of the lake.

But soon yearning, like his master, for profounder solitudes, he determined to seek a retreat in the midst of the surrounding forests. On communicating his design to Hildebald, a deacon under Willimar, who was intimately acquainted with the woods, the latter tried to dissuade him, by describing the perils of the forest and the multitude of wild beasts. "If God be with us," replied Gallus, "who can be against us? all things work together for good to them that love God."

Thus overruled, the deacon persuaded him

at least to take some bread and a fishing-net, and after prayer the two set out on their journey. They had travelled till nearly three in the afternoon, when the deacon proposed that they should stop and refresh themselves before proceeding further. Gallus, however, true to the rule of his master, bade the deacon do as he pleased, but declared that, for himself, he was resolved to taste nothing till God should point out the site of their retreat.

Evening was closing on a long summer's day as they reached a stream falling down from a rock, where they succeeded in taking a few fish, which the deacon proceeded to broil over a fire, while the other in the meantime retired to seek a quiet spot where he might engage in prayer. He had not gone far when his foot caught in some bushes, and he fell down. The deacon hastened to raise him up, but Gallus declined his aid, saying, "Let me alone: this is my resting-place for life; here will I dwell." Then rising up, he made a cross of hazel boughs and planted it in the ground, and suspending from it his casket of relics, continued for some time engaged in prayer that God would enable him to erect a monastery on this spot. Their devotions ended, the two partook of supper; and while the deacon pretended to be asleep, Gallus engaged in conflict with a bear, which, his biographer tells us,[1] in obedience to the words of

[1] "Vita S. Galli," Pertz, "Mon. Germ," vol. ii. p. 9,

so holy a man, condescended to lay aside its usual ferocity, and to leave them unharmed.

In the morning the deacon repaired to the stream of the Steinach, and while fishing beheld two demons in the form of women, who pelted him with stones, and imprecated curses on the head of his master He returned to Gallus, to whose word the demons were found to be as obedient as the bear had been on the preceding night, and forsook the stream. With a present of fish they now made their way back to Willimar, and recounted all that had befallen them.

Shortly afterwards a message from Gunzo, the pagan chieftain who had been instrumental in expelling Columbanus from the country, summoned Gallus to cure his daughter, who was possessed with a demon. The spirit recognised the voice of him who had spoken words of power on the lake, the maiden recovered, and on her arrival at the court of the King of Austrasia, to whom she was espoused, recounted all that had befallen her, and secretly took the veil, a step which had been suggested by the missionary, and was not resented by the king. The valuable presents which were bestowed upon him in acknowledgment of the benefit he had conferred Gallus distributed among the poor of Arbon. Among them was a silver cup, which one of his disciples begged him to keep for the service of the altar. "Silver and gold have I

none," replied the other; "vessels of brass sufficed my master for the celebration of the sacred feast, and they shall be sufficient for me. Let it be given to the poor."

He then retired permanently to his retreat in the forest, where he was joined by a deacon named John, and twelve other monks, with whose assistance he cleared the waste, and erected the famous monastery which now bears his name. The see of Constance falling vacant, he repaired thither with the deacons John and Magnoald on the invitation of the duke, Gunzo, and there met the bishops of Autun, Spires, and Verdun, and a large body of clergy and laity assembled to elect a successor. After some deliberation Gunzo addressed them, and exhorted them to choose a proper bishop according to the canons, and one who would rule his see with diligence.

The eyes of all were fixed upon Gallus, and all agreed that no other was so fitted for the high office. But the missionary declined the proffered honour, remarking that the canons, except in the most urgent cases, did not permit strangers to be ordained bishops of districts of which they were not natives. "But," he added, "I have a deacon of your own people, who is well fitted to fill the office, and I propose him for your acceptance." Thereupon the deacon John, who during their deliberations had retired to the church of St. Stephen, was brought forth with acclamations

by the people, presented to the bishops, and forthwith consecrated. Mass was then celebrated, and after reading the Gospel, Gallus was requested to preach to the assembled multitude. Accordingly he commenced his sermon,[1] which the newly elected bishop interpreted.

The discourse was little more than an abridged history of religion, and of the chief events from the Creation to the preaching of the Apostles. The Origin of the world, the Fall of our first parents, the Flood, the Call of Abraham, the miracles of Moses, the kingly period of Israel's history, the calling and functions of the Prophets, the miracle of the Incarnation, the Sufferings, Death, and Resurrection of man's Redeemer, the mission of the Apostles,—each of these points was treated in turn, and made the text of some moral observations.

Seven days were spent at Constance, and then Gallus returned to his cell in the forest, where he spent the rest of his life, superintending for twelve years the labours of his monastic brethren. Receiving information of the death of his great master, Columbanus, he sent one of his disciples to make inquiries as to the day and hour of his demise, and

[1] It is given in full in Canisius, "Antiq. Lect." vol. i. p. 784, and the "Acta SS." Oct. 16; in an abridged form in Pertz, "Vita S. Galli," vol. ii. p. 14.

received in reply a letter from the brethren at Bobbio, and the pastoral staff of the great abbot, which the latter had bequeathed to him. Once, and only once more, did he consent to leave his retreat. At the urgent request of Willimar he paid a visit to him at Arbon, and on the occasion of a solemnity preached to a large congregation. Setting out on his return, he was attacked with fever, and before he could regain his favourite retreat was overtaken by death, on the 16th of October, A.D. 627.

The life of St. Gall, like that of his master Columbanus, had been eminent for self-denial and usefulness. He had revived the faith in the ancient see of Constance, he had reclaimed from barbarism the district bordering on the Black Forest. He had taught the people the arts of agriculture, as well as the duties of religion, and the humble cell of the apostle of Switzerland became after his death the resort of thousands of pilgrims, and was replaced by a more magnificent edifice, erected under the auspices of Pepin l'Herislta, which during the ninth and tenth centuries was the asylum of learning and one of the most celebrated schools of Europe

CHAPTER IV.

ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY.

WHILE, however, these and other missionary bands were carrying the light of the Gospel into the countries bordering on the northern and eastern parts of France, events had taken place in England destined to exercise a profound influence on the consolidation and development of the churches of the Continent, and the evangelization of the Germanic races.

Some five years before the founder of Luxeuil left Ireland for France, that is, about A.D. 575, the famous Gregory the Great, then a monk in the monastery of St. Andrew on the Cœlian mount at Rome, was one day passing through the market-place, when he noticed several gangs of slaves exposed for sale. Amongst them three boys, distinguished for their fair complexion, the beautiful expression of their faces,[1] and their light flaxen hair, especially arrested his attention. Struck with pity, he inquired from what part of the world they had come, and was answered, "From Britain, where all the inhabitants have the same fair complexion." He next proceeded to inquire whether the people of this strange country were Christians or pagans, and hearing that they were pagans, he heaved a deep sigh, and answered that it was sad to think

[1] See Bede, "H. E." ii. 1.

"that beings so full of light and brightness should be in the power of the prince of darkness."

He next asked the name of their nation. "Angles," was the reply; whereupon, as was his manner, playing on the word, he answered, "Rightly are they called 'Angles,' for their faces are as the faces of angels, and they ought to be fellow-heirs with the angels of heaven." Once more he asked, "And from what province do they come?" He was told that they came from Deira.[1] "Rightly," he replied, 'are they named Deirans. From the ire of God are they plucked and to the mercy of God are they called. And who is the king of this province?" he proceeded. "Ælla," was the reply. The word reminded him of the Hebrew expression of praise, and he answered, "Allelujah! the praise of God shall be chanted in that clime."

Then the abbot went his way, but he could not forget the sight of those fair-haired Yorkshire boys. He immediately conceived the idea of proceeding as a missionary to England, and, having obtained the permission of the Pope, had actually accomplished three days' journey thither, when he was overtaken by the messengers, whom a furious mob had compelled the Pontiff to send and recall him to

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[1] The country between the Tyne and the Humber, including Durham and Yorkshire,

their city. Five years, however, after his own elevation to the Papal chair, A.D. 595, an opportunity occurred of carrying out by another the work he had been prevented executing in person.

In the year A D. 568 Ethelbert succeeded to the kingdom of Kent, and soon became lord over all the kings south of the Humber. The proximity of Kent to the Continent had favoured the maintenance of the old connexion between Britain and France, and Ethelbert had married a Christian princess, Bertha, the daughter of Charibert, king of Paris. As one of the conditions of the marriage it had been agreed that the queen should be allowed to enjoy the free exercise of her religion, and she had been attended to the Kentish court by a French bishop named Luidhard, who was permitted by Ethelbert to celebrate the worship of the Christians' God in the little church of St. Martin, a relic of Roman-British times, outside the walls of Canterbury.

It is only probable that Bertha should have endeavoured, during a union of twenty years, to influence her husband on the side of Christianity, and it is not surprising that many of the people of Kent, whose own heathen hierarchy had sunk into insignificance, should have been anxious to receive some instruction in the religion of their queen. Accordingly they made application to the Frankish bishops for Christian teachers, and it was probably intelli-

gence of this which determined Gregory to make another attempt to evangelize the country. He wrote, therefore, to Candidus,[1] who administered the patrimony of the Roman Church in Gaul, directing him to buy up English youths from seventeen to twenty years of age, that they might be trained in different monasteries, and become missionaries in their native land. At length, in the sixth year of his pontificate, A.D. 596, he selected from his own monastery on the Cœlian hill a band of forty monks, whom he placed under their prior, Augustine, and enjoined them to commence a direct mission in England.

Accordingly, in the summer of that year, Augustine and his companions set out, traversed rapidly the north of Italy, and crossing the Gallic Alps reached the neighbourhood of Aix in Provence. Here the courage of the little band began to fail, and they sighed for the security of their cells on the Cœlian hill. The accounts they received of the savage character of the Saxons filled them with alarm, and they prevailed on Augustine to return to Rome, and obtain for himself and his companions a release from their arduous enterprise.

But Augustine had to deal, in Gregory, with one who lived up to the stern rule of the Benedictine order, who had learnt to crush all

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[1] See Greg. Epp. viii. 7.

human weakness, and to recognize no call but that of duty. He was forthwith sent back with a letter to his timid brethren, wherein they were enjoined to suffer nothing to deter them from carrying out the work they had undertaken, and bidden to remember that the more arduous the labour, the greater would be their eternal reward.

Thus urged by an authority they dared not resist, the missionaries slowly bent their steps from Aix to Arles, thence to Vienne, and so through Tours and Anjou to the sea-coast. There they provided themselves with interpreters from among the Franks, and setting sail, landed at some point on the Isle of Thanet.[1]

Once safely on shore, they sent messengers to Ethelbert to announce that they had come from Rome, that they were the bearers of joyful tidings, and could promise him glory in heaven and an everlasting kingdom with the living and true God. Ethelbert received the messengers in a friendly spirit, but with characteristic caution begged that for the present they would remain on the other side of the Stour, and would abstain from entering Canterbury; and stipulated further that their first interview should not take place under a

[1] Either at (1) Ebbe's Fleet, or (2) at a spot called the Boarded Groin, or (3) at Stonar near Sandwich, or (4) at Richborough. See Stanley's "Memorials of Canterbury," pp. 34, 35.

roof, but in the open air, for fear of the charms and spells which he fancied they might exercise upon him.

Accordingly the Saxon king repaired to the Isle of Thanet, and there under an ancient oak awaited the coming of Augustine. To make a deeper impression on the monarch's mind, Augustine, following probably advice he had received from Gregory, advanced in solemn procession preceded by a verger carrying a silver cross, and followed by another bearing aloft on a board, painted and gilded, a representation of the Saviour. Then came the rest of the brethren, and the choir headed by Laurence and the deacon Peter, who chanted a solemn litany.

Arrived in the king's presence, they were bidden to seat themselves upon the ground. Ethelbert could not understand Latin, and Augustine could not speak Anglo-Saxon; so the Frankish priests interpreted while the missionary explained the meaning of the picture which was borne aloft, and told the king how the merciful One there depicted had left his throne in heaven, died for the sins of a guilty world, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Ethelbert listened attentively, and then, in a manner at once politic and courteous, replied that the promises of the strangers were fair, but the tidings they had announced new and full of a meaning he did not understand.

He promised them, however, kindness and hospitality, together with liberty to celebrate their sacred services, and undertook that none of his subjects, who might be so disposed, should be prohibited from espousing their religion. Thus successful beyond their utmost expectations, Augustine and his companions again formed a procession, and crossing the ferry to Richborough, advanced into the rude city of Canterbury, then embosomed in thickets, chanting as they went along one of the solemn litanies they had learned from Gregory, and took up their abode in the Stable-gate, till the king should finally make up his mind.

Admitted into the city, the missionaries devoted themselves to prayer and holy exercises, and winning the regard of all the people were next allowed to worship with the queen in the church of St. Martin, and devoted themselves to their great work with renewed zeal. At last Ethelbert avowed his willingness to embrace the faith, and to the great joy, we need not doubt, of Bertha, was baptized in all probability at St. Martin's church, on the 2d of June, being the feast of Whitsunday, A.D. 597. The conversion of the sovereign was the signal for the baptism of the people also, many of whom, it is not improbable, had intermarried with their British subjects; and on the next Christmas Day upwards of ten thousand were baptized in the waters of the Swale,

at the mouth of the Medway, and thus sealed their acceptance of the new faith.

Augustine's next step was to repair to France, where, in accordance with the plans of Gregory, he received consecration to the episcopal office at the hands of the Archbishop of Arles. On his return he took up his abode in the wooden palace of the king, who retired to Reculver. Hard by the residence of the bishop, shrouded in a grove of oaks, was an old British or Roman church. This Ethelbert had converted into a temple wherein to worship his Saxon gods. Augustine did not destroy it, but dedicated it to St. Pancras,[1] and it became the nucleus of his first monastery.

Now also Laurence and Peter were entrusted with the task of returning to Gregory at Rome, and recounting to him the success of the mission. They were to tell him how the country of the fair-haired slaves he had pitied in the Forum had received the faith, and how Augustine himself, in conformity with his instructions, had been raised to the episcopate. Moreover, they were to beg for answers to certain questions which caused the new bishop some anxiety. These related to the establishment of the revenues of Canterbury, various points of discipline, and especially the differ-

[1] Thus recalling to mind the monastery on the Cœlian hill, which had been built on the property belonging to the family of St. Pancras. See Stanley's "Memorials of Canterbury," p. 38.

ences between the Roman and the Gallican liturgies, with which Augustine had become acquainted during his passage through France, and which in the face of the British clergy in the island might cause trouble.

After some time the messengers returned with the replies of the Pope. Respecting the liturgies, Augustine was directed to select either from the Roman or the Gallican uses whatever appeared to him pious, religious, and right, to collect it into a volume, and establish it as the liturgy of the Anglo-Saxon Church, ever remembering as a guiding principle that "things were not to be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things." With these directions were others respecting the way in which the missionary was to deal with the monuments of heathenism. Gregory had written to Ethelbert requesting him to destroy the heathen temples in his dominions. But he was not satisfied as to the expediency of such a course, and now, after much consideration, he wrote to Augustine, directing him not to destroy the temples, but only the idols that might be therein. As to the structures themselves, if well built, they were to be purified with holy water and converted into Christian churches. The heathen festivals might, instead of being rudely abolished, be similarly consecrated by Christian associations and the celebration of the birthdays of the saints.

The bearers of these letters were accompanied by fresh labourers as a reinforcement to the mission, and they brought with them ecclesiastical vestments, sacred vessels, some relics of apostles and martyrs, a present of books, including a Bible in two volumes, two Psalters, two copies of the Four Gospels, and expositions of certain Epistles. They were further charged with the pall of a metropolitan for Augustine himself, which made him independent of the bishops of France, and with a letter explaining the course which the archbishop was to take in developing his work. London was to be his metropolitan see, and he was to consecrate twelve bishops under him; and whenever Christianity had extended to York, he was to place there also a metropolitan, with a like number of suffragans.

The course he was to pursue being thus defined, Augustine invited the old British or Welsh clergy to a conference at a spot on the Severn, in Gloucestershire, which was for a long time afterwards called "Augustine's Oak." Prepared to make considerable concessions, he yet felt that three points did not admit of being sacrificed. He proposed, therefore, that the British Church should conform to the Roman usage in the celebration of Easter and the sacrament of baptism, and that they should aid him in evangelizing the heathen Saxons. After a long and fruitless discussion on the first day, during which the British clergy clung as

pertinaciously to their traditions as Columbanus at Luxeuil, he proposed that an appeal should be made to the Divine judgment. A blind Saxon was brought in, whom the British Christians were unable to cure. Augustine supplicated the Divine aid, and the man, we are told, forthwith recovered his sight.

Convinced, but unwilling to alter their old customs, the vanquished party proposed another meeting. Seven British bishops assembled on this occasion, together with Dinoth, abbot of the great monastery of Bangor in Flintshire. Before the synod met, they proposed to ask the advice of an aged hermit whether they ought to change the traditions of their fathers. "Yes," replied the old man, "if the new-comer be a man of God." "But how are we to know whether he be a man of God?" they asked. "The Lord saith," was the reply, "'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly.' Now if this Augustine is meek and lowly, be assured that he beareth the yoke of Christ." "Nay, but how are we to know this?" they asked again. "If he rises to meet you, when ye approach," answered the hermit, "hear and follow him; but if he despises you, and fails to rise from his place, let him also be despised by you."

The synod met, and Augustine remained seated, nor rose at their approach to receive them. It was enough. It was plain that he had not the spirit of Christ, and no efforts of

the archbishop could induce the British clergy to yield one of his demands. "If he will not so much as rise up to greet us," said his opposers, "how much more will he contemn us if we submit ourselves to him?" Thereupon Augustine broke up the conference, with an angry threat that, if the British clergy would not accept peace with their brethren, they must look for war with their foes, and if they would not proclaim the way of life to the Saxons, they would suffer deadly vengeance at their hands.

Thus unsuccessful in winning over the British clergy to conformity, Augustine returned to Canterbury. And now, as all Kent had espoused the faith, Justus was consecrated to the see of Rochester, and at the same time, through the connexion of Ethelbert with the King of Essex, that kingdom was opened to ecclesiastical supervision, and Mellitus was advanced to the bishopric of London. This was the limit of Augustine's success. It fell, indeed, far short of Gregory's design, but that design had been formed on a very imperfect acquaintance either with the condition of the island, the strong national prejudices of the British Christians, or the relations which subsisted between the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. In the following year, May 26, A.D. 605, the first Archbishop of Canterbury died,[1] having

[1] Stanley's "Memorials of Canterbury," p. 44 *n.*

already consecrated Laurence as his successor, and was laid in a grave by the Roman road outside the city walls.

After his death the work of evangelization still went on. It was the work, however, not of one, but of two parties; the Roman, aided by their converts and some teachers out of France, and the Irish, whom Augustine had vainly endeavoured to persuade to join him in the work of proclaiming the faith to the Saxons.

The first party sent Paulinus to Northumbria, Felix to East Anglia, Birinus to Wessex, and Wilfrid to Sussex; the latter sent Fursey to East Anglia, Aidan from the monastery of Hy to Northumbria,[1] Finan to Essex, Cedd, Atta, Diuma, and Cellach into Mercia. Though the labourers could not agree together on several points of ritual and discipline, the work nevertheless prospered, and at length the missionary stations dotted over the island were replaced by a regularly established Church, and our forefathers, once notorious for their fierceness and barbarity, were so far softened by Christian influences, that in no country was the new faith more manifestly the parent of progress and civilization, and, as will be seen in the next chapter, of an ardent missionary zeal, eager to transmit the light of truth to kindred

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[1] See "The Hermits," by Professor Kingsley, pp. 289-291.

Teutonic tribes in their native Germanic forests.

CHAPTER V.

ST. BONIFACE.

ABOUT the year A.D. 680 there was living at Crediton, or Kirton, about eight miles north-west of Exeter, a noble family, amongst whose children was a boy named Winfrid. At an early period the boy betrayed much promise, and was designed by his parents for a secular career. But the visit of some monastic brothers to his father's house quickened a desire in his heart to embrace the monastic life. His father strongly opposed such a step, till at length alarmed by a dangerous illness he relented, and at seven years of age Winfrid was removed to a conventual school at Exeter under Abbot Wolfard, and thence to Nutescelle in Hampshire, in the diocese of Winchester.[1]

Here, under Abbot Winberct, he took the name of Boniface, and became eminent for his diligence and devotion, for his deep acquaintance with the Scriptures and his skill in preaching. At the age of thirty he received ordination, and his well-known talents procured for him on several occasions high eccle-

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1 "Vita S. Bonifacii," Pertz, "Mon. Germ." vol. ii. p. 336.

siastical employments. King Ina honoured him with his confidence, and the united recommendations of his brethren led to his being sent, on more than one occasion, on a confidential mission to Archbishop Brihtwald. He might therefore have risen to an honourable position in his native land, but other aspirations had now taken possession of his soul.

No stories were listened to at this time in the Anglo-Saxon monasteries with greater avidity than those connected with the adventurous mission of Archbishop Willibrord among the heathen tribes of Frisia, and Boniface longed to join the noble band beyond the sea. On communicating his design to his abbot, the latter would have dissuaded him from the arduous enterprise, but he remained firm, and with three of the brethren, whom he had persuaded to accompany him, left Nutescelle for London. There he took ship, and crossing the sea, landed at Doerstadt, then a flourishing emporium, now almost obliterated from historical memory. But the time of his coming, A.D. 716, was unpropitious. Radbod was engaged in a furious conflict with Charles Martel, a fierce persecution of the Christians had broken out, and Boniface was fain to return to his cloister at Nutescelle.

During the ensuing winter Abbot Winberct died, and Boniface, had he listened to the earnest solicitations of his brethren, might

have been cordially welcomed as his successor. But the old missionary ardour still burned brightly, and with the return of spring he had made up his mind to make another effort in Frisia. Daniel, bishop of Winchester, strongly favoured his designs, and gave him commendatory letters to the Pope, whose consent and patronage he was anxious to secure before entering a second time on his difficult enterprise. Accordingly, the year A.D. 717 saw him again in London, where he embarked and sailed to Etaples, on the coast of Normandy. In the autumn he set out through France with a large body of pilgrims, and, crossing the Alps, reached Rome in safety, and delivered the letters of his diocesan to Gregory II. That Pontiff gave the ardent monk a hearty welcome, and during the winter discussed with him in frequent interviews the prospects of the mission, and finally presented him with a letter authorizing him to preach the Gospel in Germany whenever he might find an opportunity.

In the following spring, therefore, armed with this commission, he set out, and, crossing the Alps, first commenced labouring in Thuringia. While thus employed he received intelligence of the death of Radbod, and immediately repaired to the country of that chieftain. The recent successes of Charles Martel had opened a way for Christianity in the Frisian kingdom, and for three years Boniface

united himself with the missionary band under Willibrord at Utrecht, and in the destruction of many heathen temples and the rise of Christian churches saw his labours crowned with no little success. Feeling the advance of age, Willibrord was now anxious that his friend from Nutescelle should succeed him in the see of Utrecht, but Boniface firmly declined the honour, and left him to plunge into the wilds of Hesse. Two native chiefs were attracted by his preaching, and submitted to baptism. At Amöneburg, near the Ohm, a monastery speedily arose, and the energetic missionary found that the protection of the converted chief, and his own acquaintance with the native language, gained for him such an access to the hearts of the people, that multitudes, both in Hesse and on the borders of Saxony, accepted baptism at his hands.

A faithful brother, Binna, was now deputed to announce to Gregory these gratifying results; and the Pope, who could not fail to foresee the issue of labours so auspiciously begun, summoned him once more to Rome. Thither Boniface obediently went, escorted by a numerous retinue of Franks and Burgundians, and in reply to the Pope's questions respecting the faith which he preached, handed him a copy of his creed. Gregory duly examined it, and, after an interval of five days, again admitted him to an audience, and announced that, in consideration of the success

he had already achieved, he was ready to confer upon him the episcopal dignity. Accordingly, on the Feast of St. Andrew, A.D. 723, he was consecrated regionary bishop, without any particular diocese, but with a general jurisdiction over all whom he might win over from paganism to the Christian fold. Thus elevated to the episcopal dignity, with letters of commendation to Charles Martel, to the bishops of Bavaria and Alemannia, and the native chiefs of the countries where he was about to labour, Boniface recrossed the Alps, and, with the permission and protection of Charles Martel, recommenced operations in Hesse.

He found that matters had not improved during his absence. Some of his converts had remained firm in the faith, but the majority, still fascinated by the spell of their old superstitions, had blended their new and old creed in a wild confusion. They still worshipped groves and fountains, still consulted augurs and cast lots, still offered sacrifice on the old altars. Boniface saw that he must take strenuous measures to convince them of the vanity of their old belief. A letter he received about this time from the Bishop of Winchester, now blind and far advanced in years, suggested caution in dealing with the primitive superstitions of the people. A Teuton himself, and writing to a Teutonic missionary, he would have him scrupulously avoid

all contemptuous and violent language, and advised that he should try, above all things, to cultivate a spirit of patience and moderation. In preference to open controversy, he suggested that he should rather put such questions from time to time as would tend to rouse the people to a sense of the contradictions which their superstitions involved, especially in relation to the genealogy of their gods.

"They will admit," he writes, "that the gods they worship had a beginning, that there was a time when they were not. Ask them, then, whether they consider the world also to have had a beginning, or whether it has always existed from the first commencement of things. Again, inquire who governed and sustained the world before the birth of those gods whom they adore? By what means were they able to gain a supremacy of power over a universe which had existed from all time? Whence, how, and when was the first god or goddess born? Are more deities still in process of generation? If not, why and when did the law of celestial increase come to an end? Ask them, again, whether, amidst such a multitude of powerful deities as they acknowledge, there is not danger of failing to discover *the most powerful*, and thus offending him? Why, in fact, are these gods worshipped? For the sake of present and temporal, or for the sake of future and eternal happiness? What, again,

is the import of their sacrifices? If the gods are all-powerful, what do they gain by them? If they do not need them, why attempt to appease them with such costly offerings? Such questions I would have thee put to them, not in the way of taunt or mockery, which will only irritate, but kindly and gently. Then, after a while, compare their superstitions with the Christian doctrines, and touch upon the latter judiciously, that thy people may not be exasperated against thee, but ashamed of their foolish errors." [1]

Useful and wise as was such advice in reference to his general conduct, Boniface deemed that the present juncture required sterner and more uncompromising measures. Near Geismar, in Upper Hesse, stood an ancient oak, sacred for ages to Donar, or Thor, the god of thunder. By the people it was regarded with peculiar reverence, and was the rallying-point of the assemblies of all the tribes. Again and again had Boniface declaimed against such senseless worship of the stock of a tree, but his sermons had fallen dead on the ears of his hearers. He determined, therefore, to remove an object of such superstitious reverence from the midst of his converts. One day, axe in hand, and accompanied by all his clergy, he advanced to cut down the offending monarch of the forest. The people assembled in thou-

[1] Migne's "Script. Eccles." sæc. viii. p. 707.

sands; many enraged at his interference with their traditions, many more confident that an instant judgment would certainly strike down so daring an offender. But stroke after stroke of the axe fell, and it became clear that Thor could not defend his own. In vain his votaries supplicated his vengeance, and besought him to vindicate his power. Before long a crashing was heard in the topmost boughs, and then the leafy idol came down to the ground, and split asunder into four quarters. Unable to gainsay the reality of his victory, the people acknowledged that the missionary had prevailed, nor did they interfere when he directed that an oratory in honour of St. Peter should be constructed out of the remains of their old divinity.

This stumbling-block having been removed out of the midst of his people, Boniface found the work of evangelization materially facilitated. Throughout Hesse and Thuringia the word had free course; heathen temples disappeared; humble churches rose amidst the forest glades; monastic buildings sprung up wherever salubrity of soil and the presence of running water suggested an inviting site; the land was cleared and brought under the plough; and the sound of prayer and praise in humble churches awoke unwonted echoes in the forests. *The harvest truly was plenteous, but the labourers were few.*[1] Boniface deter-

[1] St. Matt. ix. 37, 38.

mined, therefore, to invite assistance from his native land. In a circular letter addressed, in the year A.D. 733, to the bishops, clergy, and principal abbots in England, he pointed, in moving words, to the wants of his German converts. "We beseech you," he writes, "that ye will remember us in your prayers to God and our Lord Jesus Christ, who would have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth, that he will vouchsafe to convert to the true faith the hearts of the heathen Saxons, that they may be delivered from the snares of the Evil One, wherewith they are now held captive. Have compassion on them, brethren. They often say, 'We are of one blood with our brothers in England.' Remember they are your kinsmen according to the flesh. Remember that the time for working is short, for the end of all things is at hand, and death cannot praise God, nor can any give him thanks in the pit.[1] Aid us, then, while yet it is day."[2]

In other letters he begs for copies of different portions of the Divine Word. Thus to the abbess Eadburga he writes, to request her to send him the Epistles of St. Peter inscribed in gilded letters, that he might use them in preaching; to another he writes for copies of the Gospels, written in a good, clear hand,

[1] Ps. vi. 5; Isa. xxxviii. 18.

[2] Migne, "Script. Eccles." sæc. viii. p. 739.

suitable for his weak eyes, as also for commentaries, among which he particularly specifies those of the venerable Bede. His appeals were not ineffectual. Not a few flocked from England to rally round him, and even devout women were found willing to sacrifice the pleasures and comforts of home, and go forth to superintend the convents which the missionary had inaugurated. As iron sharpeneth iron, so the countenances of friends from the old country refreshed and invigorated the spirits of the good bishop.

Meanwhile news arrived of the death of Pope Gregory II. Still anxious to maintain his connexion with the Holy See, Boniface wrote to his successor and besought his blessing on his labours, and in the pall of a metropolitan received a marked recognition of his work. But not content with a distant correspondence, he once more, A.D. 738, crossed the Alps and sought a personal interview with Gregory III. The latter received him with more than ordinary respect. He invested him with plenary power as legate of the Apostolic See, and authorized him to visit and organize the Bavarian churches.

With letters accrediting him in his new capacity, Boniface returned, in the spring of A.D. 739, and after a short stay at Pavia with Liutprand, king of the Lombards, commenced a thorough visitation of the diocese of Bavaria, and added to the solitary see of Passau those

of Salzburg, Freisingen, and Ratisbon. While at Rome, the archbishop had learnt that his kinsman Wunibald had come thither from England, and that another, Willibald, had just returned from the Holy Land and entered the monastery of Monte Cassino. He persuaded both of them, however, to join him in Germany; placed Wunibald in charge of seven churches in the newly-converted Thuringia, and stationed Willibald at Eichstadt, then a waste forest-land, which Count Suiger of Hirsberg had bestowed upon the Church. He then wrote to Tetta, abbess of Winburn, in Dorsetshire, requesting that Walpurga, a sister of Wunibald, as well as any other of his countrywomen who might be willing, should be sent out to share the work in Germany.

Walpurga did not shrink from the perils of the journey; with thirty companions sh crossed the sea, and after a joyful meetin with the archbishop, proceeded to join he brother in Thuringia, and settled for a time in a convent beside him there. Afterwards she accompanied him to Heidenheim, in the wilds of Suevia, where they built a church, and, after much difficulty, a double monastery for monks and nuns. The companions also of Walpurga before long presided over similar sisterhoods. Thus Lioba, afterwards the friend of Hildegard, consort of Charlemagne, was stationed at Bischofsheim on the Tuber; Chunichild, another devout sister, in

Thuringia; and Chunitrude in Bavaria. It was not always easy to reconcile the natives to the erection of these outposts of civilization in their midst. Many deemed it a profanation of the awful silence of the old oak-groves, and an insult to the elves and fairies who for untold ages had haunted the primeval solitudes. Many more regarded with much suspicion this intrusion on their old hunting-grounds, and would have preferred that the peace of the wolf and the bear should not be disturbed. But as years rolled on, the peaceful lives of the missionaries won their respect and reverence, and the sight of waving cornfields reconciled them to the violation of their forest sanctuaries.

In the year A.D. 741 Charles Martel died, and Boniface saw fresh opportunities opened up for carrying on and consolidating the labours of the various missionary bands. It is true that the great Mayor of the Palace never thwarted his operations, or declined to recognize his authority, but he tolerated many of the clergy whose lives by no means corresponded with their sacred profession, and the gratitude due to the conqueror of the Saracens was considerably marred by his practice of pillaging churches and monasteries from time to time, when he wanted money for his numerous wars. Now that he was dead, the archbishop's course was more clear, and by reason of his great influence over Carloman and Pepin

he could develope his plans for a systematic organization of the German churches. He began by founding four new bishoprics, Würzburg, Eichstädt, Bamberg, and Erfurt, and in the following year proceeded to call a council of ecclesiastics and the national estates to make provision for the moral and spiritual superintendence of the newly-formed churches.

Three years afterwards the Bishop of Cologne died, and the idea occurred to Boniface of elevating that place to be his metropolitan see, especially as it was suitable for a basis of more extended missions in Friesland, where, since the death of Willibrord, the work had somewhat retrograded. While corresponding on the subject with the Pope, an event occurred which gave an entirely different turn to the negotiations. In the same year that the Bishop of Cologne died, Gerold, bishop of Mayence, was slain in a warlike expedition against the Saxons. To console his son Gewillieb for the loss of his father, he was consecrated as his successor, though until now he had been only a layman in Carloman's court, and had displayed more than ordinary fondness for the chase. In the following year Carloman headed another expedition against the Saxons, and Gewillieb followed in his train. The armies encamped on either side of a river, and, unmindful of his sacred office, Gewillieb sent a page to inquire the name of the chief who had slain his father. Ascertain-

ing it, he sent the same messenger a second time to request the chief to meet him in friendly conference in the middle of the stream. The latter complied, and the two rode into the water, and during the conference the bishop stabbed the Saxon to the heart.

This act of treachery was the signal for a general engagement, in which Carloman gained a decisive victory over the Saxons. Gewillieb returned to his diocese. But Boniface could not allow so flagrant an infraction of the canons enacted in the recent synod to pass unrebuked. In the Council, therefore, of the following year, he made a formal charge against the blood-stained bishop. Unable to struggle against his authority, Gewillieb was obliged to vacate his see, and Mayence became the seat of Boniface as metropolitan, where he exercised jurisdiction over the dioceses of Mayence, Worms, Spires, Tongres, Cologne, Utrecht, as well as the newly-evangelized tribes whom he had won over to the Christian faith.

In the letter wherein Boniface communicated to the Pope this alteration in his plans he made a request more nearly relating to himself. He was now verging on threescore years and ten, and his long and incessant labours had begun to tell upon his constitution. Weighed down with the care of all the churches in Germany, he longed for some diminution of the burdens which pressed upon

him, and had already requested to be allowed to nominate his successor. This the Pope declined to allow, but conceded to his age and infirmities the permission to select a priest as his special assistant, who might share a portion of his episcopal duties. Increasing weakness now induced him to reiterate his request, and the Pope, while reminding him of the words, *He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved*,[1] agreed that if he could find amongst his clergy one in whom he could place implicit confidence, he might elevate him to the post, and receive his assistance as his coadjutor and representative. Upon this Boniface nominated his fellow-countryman and disciple, Lullus, and proposed to retire himself to the monastery now rising on the banks of the river Fulda, where he might spend the autumn of his life in watching the beneficial results of the labours of the brethren amidst the surrounding tribes.

But while thus toiling in the land of his adoption, he was not unmindful of his old friends in England. Pleasant memories of Crediton and Nutescelle still lay near his heart; and though unable to revisit these familiar scenes, he yet maintained a constant correspondence with friends in the old country, and rejoiced to receive tidings of the welfare of the Anglo-Saxon churches, just as he was

[1] St. Matt. xxiv. 13.

pained to the heart when he heard of any moral or spiritual declension. Thus hearing that Ethelbald, king of Mercia, was living in gross immorality, he wrote to him in earnest terms, and endeavoured to shame him into a more consistent life by contrasting his conduct with that of the still heathen Saxons in the forests of Germany, who, though they had not the law of Christianity, yet did by nature the things contained in the law, and testified by severe punishments their abhorrence of impurity. He also wrote to Archbishop Cuthbert, informing him of the regulations made in the recent synods, and urging him to use every endeavour to maintain the vitality of the Church of their native land.

Thus, amidst increasing infirmities and many causes for anxiety, he yet found time to remember old scenes and old friends. But very soon the conviction was deepened in his own mind that the day of his departure was at hand. Lullus had, indeed, been appointed his coadjutor in the see of Mayence, but his appointment had not yet received the royal sanction, and till this was secured Boniface could not feel free from anxiety for the welfare of his flock. One of his latest letters, therefore, was addressed to Fuldrad, Pepin's archchaplain, soliciting his protection and that of his royal master in behalf of his clergy and his many ecclesiastical foundations. In this very year he had been called upon to restore up-

wards of thirty churches in his extensive diocese, which had been swept away during an invasion of the heathen Frisians, and it was with gloomy forebodings that he contemplated the fate of the German Church, if it was not shielded by royal protection.

"Nearly all my companions," he writes to Fuldrad, "are strangers in this land. Some are priests distributed in various places to celebrate the offices of the Church and minister to the people. Some are monks living in different monasteries and engaged in teaching the young. Some are aged men, who have long borne with me the burden and the heat of the day. For all these I am full of anxiety, lest after my death they should be scattered as sheep having no shepherd. Let them have a share of your countenance and protection, that they may not be dispersed abroad, and that the people dwelling on the heathen borders may not lose the law of Christ. Suffer also Lullus, my son and coadjutor, to preside over the churches, that both priests and people may find in him a teacher and a guide; and may God grant that he may prove a faithful pastor to the flock. I have many reasons for making these requests. My clergy on the heathen borders are in deep poverty. Bread they can obtain for themselves, but clothing they cannot find here, unless they receive aid from some other quarter to enable them to persevere and endure their

hardships. Let me know, either by the bearers of this letter or under thine own hand, whether thou canst promise the granting of my request, that, whether I live or die, I may have some assurance for the future."[1]

The royal permission that Lullus should succeed him had arrived, and his mind was relieved of its load of anxiety. But again the old missionary ardour burnt up as brightly as in earlier years. Though upwards of seventy-five years of age he determined to make one last effort to win over the still pagan portion of Friesland, and to accomplish what Willibrord had begun. Bidding, therefore, his successor a solemn farewell, he ordered preparations to be made for the journey. Something told him he should never return, and therefore he desired that with his books, amongst which was a treatise of St. Ambrose on "The Advantage of Death," his shroud also might be put up. Then, with a retinue of three priests, three deacons, four monks, and forty-one laymen, he embarked on board a vessel, A.D. 755, and sailed down the Rhine. At Utrecht he was joined by Eoban, an old pupil whom he had placed in charge of the see, and then together they advanced into the eastern part of Frisia, and commenced their labours.

For a time all went well. The missionaries were welcomed by several of the tribes, and

[1] Migne, "Script. Eccles." sæc. viii. p. 779.

were enabled to lay the foundation of several churches. Gladdened by the accession of many converts, they at length reached the banks of the river Burde, not far from Dockum. It was the month of June, and the festival of Whitsunday drew near. Boniface had dismissed many who had been baptized, bidding them return on the eve of Whitsunday to receive the further rite of confirmation. On the morning of the appointed day, June 5, the noise could be plainly heard of an advancing multitude, and the brandishing of spears and the clang of arms told only too plainly on what errand they were bound. The heathen party, enraged at the success of the daring missionary, had selected this day for a signal act of vengeance. Some of the archbishop's retinue counselled resistance, and were already preparing to defend themselves, when he stepped forth from his tent, and gave orders that no weapon should be lifted, but that all should await the crown of martyrdom. "Let us not return evil for evil," said he; "the long-expected day has come, and the time of our departure is at hand. Strengthen ye yourselves in the Lord, and he will redeem your souls. Be not afraid of those who can only kill the body, but put all your trust in God, who will speedily give you an eternal reward, and an entrance into his heavenly kingdom."

Calmed by his words, his followers bravely

awaited the onset of their enemies, who rushed upon them, and quickly despatched them. The archbishop himself, we are told,[1] when he saw that his hour was come, took a volume of the Gospels, and making it a pillow for his head, stretched forth his neck for the blow, and in a few moments received his release. The heathens speedily ransacked the tents of the missionaries; but instead of the treasures they had expected, found only the bookcases which Boniface had brought with him. These they rifled, scattering some of the volumes over the plain, and hiding others among the marshes, where they remained till they were afterwards picked up and reverently removed to the monastery of Fulda, together with the remains of the great missionary.

Thus died the father of German Christian civilization. A Teuton by language and kindred, he had been the apostle of Teutons. Combining singular conscientiousness with earnest piety, dauntless zeal with practical energy, he had been enabled to consolidate the work of earlier Irish and Anglo-Saxon missionaries; he had revived the decaying energies of the Frankish Church; he had restored to her the long dormant activity of the Ecclesiastical Council; he had covered central and western Germany with the first necessary

[1] "Vita S. Bonifacii," Pertz, "Mon. Germ." vol. ii. p. 351 *n*.

elements of civilization. Monastic seminaries, as Amöneburg and Ohrdruf, Fritzlar and Fulda, had risen amidst the Teutonic forests. The sees of Salzburg and Freisingen, of Regensburg and Passau, testified to his care of the Church of Bavaria; the see of Erfurt told of labours in Thuringia; that of Buraburg, in Hesse; that of Wurzburg, in Franconia; while his metropolitan see at Mayence, having jurisdiction over Worms and Spires, Tongres, Cologne, and Utrecht, was a sign that even before his death the German Church had already advanced beyond its first missionary stage.

Well may Germany look back with gratitude to the holy Benedictine, and tell with joy the story of the monk of Nutescelle. The roll of missionary heroes, since the days of the Apostles, can point to few more glorious names, to none, perhaps, that has added to the dominion of the Gospel regions of greater extent or value, or that has exerted a more powerful influence on the history of the human race. In the monastery of Fulda was exposed for ages, to hosts of pilgrims, the blood-stained copy of St. Ambrose on "The Advantage of Death," which the archbishop had brought with his shroud to the shore of the Zuyder Zee, and the long-continued labours of many of his loving pupils and associates will prove that in his case, as in so many others, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

CHAPTER VI.

ST. CYRIL AND METHODIUS.

AND now let us turn to the great Sclavonian family of nations, whose wide territory extended eastward from the Elbe to the sluggish waters of the Don, and from the Baltic on the north to the Adriatic on the south.

While for upwards of three centuries the Teutonic tribes had been yielding to the influences of Christianity, scarcely any impression had been made on the vast population which clustered together on either side of the Danube, and thence spread onwards into the very heart of the modern Russian empire. They were still rude, warlike, and chiefly pastoral tribes, inaccessible alike to the civilization and the religion of Rome. The Eastern Empire had neither a Charlemagne to compel by force of arms, nor zealous missionaries like those of Germany to penetrate the vast plains and spreading morasses of the provinces on either side of the Danube, to found abbacies and bishoprics, to cultivate the soil and reclaim the people.[1]

1. With the death of Anskar, the great apostle of Denmark, synchronizes one of the earliest missionary efforts made amongst any portion of this great family. A map of Europe in the sixth century discloses to us the Bul-

[1] Milman's "Latin Christianity," vol. ii. p. 419.

garians established along the western shore of the Euxine, between the Danube and the Dnieper. About the year A.D. 680 they had moved in a southerly direction into the territory known in ancient times as Macedonia and Epirus. Here they bestowed their names on the Sclavonians, whom they conquered, gradually adopted their language and manners, and by intermarriage became entirely identified with them.

Unable to return either in a northerly or westerly direction, in consequence of the formidable barrier which the irruption of more powerful nations had interposed in their rear, they extended their conquest to the south of the Danube, and became involved in continual struggles with the Greek emperors. In the year A.D. 811 the Emperor Nicephorus advanced into the centre of their kingdom, and burnt their sovereign's palace. The insult was terribly avenged. Three days after his disastrous success, he was himself surrounded by the collected hordes of his barbarous foes, and fell ignominiously with the great officers of the empire. His head was exposed on a spear, and the savage warriors, true to the traditions of their Scythian wilderness, fashioned his skull into a drinking-cup, enchased it with gold, and used it at the celebrations of their victories.

But these border-wars were destined to produce more beneficent results. In the early

part of the ninth century, when Theodora was Empress of Byzantium, a monk named Cupharas fell into the hands of the Bulgarian prince Bogoris.[1] At the same time, a sister of the prince was in captivity at Constantinople, and it was proposed by the empress that the two captives should be exchanged. During the period of her captivity the princess had adopted the Christian faith, and on her return she laboured diligently to deepen in her brother's mind the impression which had already been made by the captive monk.

The prince long remained unmoved by her entreaties. At length a famine, during which he had vainly appealed to his native deities, induced him to have recourse to the God of his sister. The result was such as he desired, and he was baptized by Photius the patriarch of Constantinople, the emperor himself standing sponsor by proxy, and the Bulgarian prince adopting his name. A short time afterwards the prince requested the emperor to send him a painter for the decoration of his palace. A monk, named Methodius, was accordingly sent, and was desired by Bogoris to adorn his hall with paintings representing the perils of hunting. As he appeared anxious for terrible subjects, the monk employed himself in painting the scene of the "Last Judgment;" and so awful was the representation of the

[1] Cedreni "Annales," p. 443.

fate of obstinate heathens, that not only was Bogoris himself induced to put away the idols he had till now retained, but even many of the court were so moved by the sight as to desire admission into the Christian Church.

So averse, however, was the great bulk of the nation to the conversion of their chief, that his baptism, which was celebrated at midnight, was kept a profound secret, the disclosure of which was the signal for a formidable rebellion in favour of the national gods, and Bogoris could only put it down by resorting to the severest measures. Photius had given to the prince at his baptism a long letter, or rather a treatise on Christian doctrine and practice, as also on the duties of a sovereign. But its language was far too refined for his comprehension; and his difficulties were further increased by the arrival of missionaries, Greek, Roman, and Armenian, who all sought his union with their respective Churches, and all propounded different doctrines. Thus perplexed by their rival claims, and unwilling to involve himself in more intimate relations with the Byzantine court, Bogoris turned to the west for aid, and made an application to Louis II. of Germany, and, at the same time, to Nicholas the Pope, requesting from both assistance in the conversion of his subjects, and from the latter more intelligible advice than he had received from the Patriarch of Constantinople.

The Pope replied by sending into Bulgaria Paul, bishop of Populonia, and Formosus, bishop of Portus, with Bibles and other books. At the same time he also sent a long letter treating of the various subjects on which Bogoris had requested advice, under one hundred and six heads. Respecting the conversion of his subjects, he advised the Bulgarian chief to abjure all violent methods, and to appeal to the weapons of reason only. Apostates, however, ought to meet with no toleration, if they persisted in refusing obedience to the monitions of their spiritual fathers. As to objects of idolatrous worship, they ought not to be treated with violence, but the company of idolaters ought to be avoided, while the cross, he suggested, might well take the place of the horse-tail as the national standard. All recourse to divination, charms, and other superstitious practices, ought to be carefully abolished, as also polygamy. As to prayer for their forefathers, who had died in unbelief, in respect to which the simple prince had requested advice, such a vain mark of filial affection could not be allowed for a moment.

With these precepts bearing on their spiritual welfare were mingled others designed to soften and civilize their savage manners. The Pope exhorted them to greater gentleness in the treatment of their slaves, and protested against their barbarous code of laws, their use of the rack in the case of suspected criminals,

and their too frequent employment of capital punishment. Finally, as to the request of the prince that a patriarch might be sent him, the Pope could not take such an important step till he had more accurate information as to the numbers of the Bulgarian Church : meanwhile he sent a bishop, who should be followed by others if it was found necessary; and as soon as the Church was organized, one with the title of archbishop or patriarch was promised.

2. The reception of Christianity in Bulgaria paved the way for its admission in other quarters. The Chazars of the Crimea, the Sclaves in the interior of Greece, the Servians, who extended from the Danube to the Adriatic, and other tribes, were more or less affected by Christian influences, though in several cases they were weakened by the equally zealous efforts of Jewish and Mussulman propagandists.

But a more important portion of the South-Sclavonic area was now to be added to the Church. In the early part of the ninth century the Kingdom of Moravia comprised a considerable territory, extending from the frontiers of Bavaria to the river Drina, and from the banks of the Danube to the river Styri in Southern Poland. Falling within the ever-widening circle of the empire of Charlemagne, it had acknowledged that monarch, and afterwards his son Louis, as its suze-

rains. According to the settled policy of these princes, the conquered territory had received a compulsory form of Christianity, and a regionary bishop had endeavoured, under the auspices of the Archbishop of Passau, to bring about the conversion of the people. But these efforts had been productive of very partial results. Foreign priests, unacquainted with the Sclavonic language, were not likely to attract many to their Latin services, or to prevent the great bulk of the people relapsing into heathenism.

But in the year A.D. 863 Moravia made great efforts to recover its independence, and Rostislav, its ruler, requested the Greek emperor Michael to send him learned men, who might translate the Scriptures into the Sclavonic tongue, and arrange the public worship upon a definite basis. "Our land is baptized," ran the message, "but we have no teachers to instruct us, or translate for us the sacred books. We do not understand the meaning of the Scriptures. Send us teachers who may explain them to us and tell us their meaning."

When the emperor Michael heard this, he called together his philosophers, and told them the message of the Sclavonic prince. The philosophers replied, "There is at Thessalonica a man named Leon. He has two sons, who both know well the Sclavonic tongue, and are both clever philosophers." On hearing this, the emperor sent to Leon at Thessa-

lonica, saying, "Send to us thy sons Methodius and Constantine [Cyril]." Whereupon Leon straightway sent them; and when they came to the emperor, he said to them, "The Sclavonic lands have sent to me, requesting teachers, that they may translate for them the Holy Scriptures."[1]

Persuaded by the emperor, they therefore went into Moravia, and having arrived began to compose a Sclavonic alphabet, making use in the composition of it of Greek letters, with the addition of certain other characters, partly Armenian and Hebrew, and partly of their own invention; the whole number amounting to forty. They then translated the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, the Psalter, and other books, and this innovation on the methods hitherto employed by western missionaries was blessed with signal success. Many of the people rejoiced to hear the word of God in their own language, and several churches were erected.

For four years and a half their work went on in peace; but soon they found no little opposition from the neighbouring German clergy, who regarded their translation of the Scriptures into the Sclavonic tongue as little short of heresy. Intelligence of this strange innovation even reached the ears of the Pope,

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[1] "Vita S. Constantini" (Cyrilli), "Acta SS. Bolland." March 2.

who summoned Cyril and Methodius to Rome. Admitted to an audience with Adrian, they recounted the method of their proceedings, and offered their creed for examination. Adrian pronounced himself satisfied, and appointed Methodius metropolitan of Moravia, and Pannonia, but without any fixed see.

Thus armed with Papal authority, Methodius returned to the scene of his labours, and achieved still greater success. But before long political troubles arose; Rostislav was betrayed into the hands of Louis of Germany, dethroned, and blinded. Thus deprived of the protection of his patron, Methodius was constrained to retire from his dangerous post into Pannonia. But even here he found himself exposed to constant suspicions, owing to his Sclavonic liturgy and Bible, and deemed it necessary to repair a second time to Rome and defend his conduct before Pope John VIII.

From this pontiff, after much discussion, he succeeded in obtaining a qualified approval of his work The Pope's scruples, we are told, were removed by remembering the verse in the Psalms, "*Praise the Lord, all ye nations.*" This verse appeared to him decisive. It could hardly mean that the Creator's praise was to be restricted to three languages, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. He who formed these languages must have formed others for His own glory. One condition, however, was annexed to the concession. The mass must be cele-

brated in one at least of the languages of the Church, either Greek or Latin, and the Gospel must be read in Latin, and then if it was thought necessary translated into the Sclavonian tongue.

Once more, therefore, Methodius returned to Moravia, and in spite of much opposition adhered firmly to the great principle that the language of each separate nation is not to give place in public worship to a sacred language peculiar to the clergy, but is itself adapted alike for public instruction and for private reading. But after his death, about A.D. 885, the opposition of the German party increased greatly, and many of the Sclavonic clergy were driven out of Moravia.

Before long Moravia was invaded by the pagan Magyars or Hungarians, whose ravages at this period in Bavaria, Germany, and Southern France, presented one of the most serious obstacles to the establishment of Christianity. More terrible than the Saracen and the Northern viking, inexhaustible in number, superior to all the Scythian hordes in military prowess-they were identified by fear-stricken Christendom with Gog and Magog, the forerunners of the dissolution of the world. From their devastations the wretched people of Moravia suffered terribly, and on the restoration of order found themselves united to the kingdom of Bohemia.

3. From Moravia, therefore, let us turn in

an easterly direction towards those Scythian wilds and level steppes, where, in A.D. 862, arose the Russian kingdom of Ruric the Norman; and where, while the Western Church was contemplating with awe and terror the gradual approach of the Day of Doom, the Eastern Church "silently and almost unconsciously bore into the world her mightiest offspring."[1]

In A.D. 955 the Princess Olga, accompanied by a numerous retinue, left Kieff on a journey to the Byzantine capital. There she was induced to embrace Christianity, and returning to her native land exerted herself with exemplary diligence to instil the doctrines of her new creed into the mind of her son Swiatoslav. But on this prince her exhortations produced little or no effect. He was the very type of the rough Varangian warrior. "Wrapped in a bearskin," writes Gibbon, "he usually slept on the ground, his head reclining on a saddle. His diet was coarse and frugal, and, like the heroes of Homer, his meat (it was often horseflesh) was boiled or roasted on the coals."[2] For him the gods of his ancestors were sufficient, and the entreaties of his mother were entirely thrown away.

Her grandson Vladimir seemed likely to prove a more docile pupil, though the zeal he

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[1] Stanley's "Eastern Church," p. 294.
[2] Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," vol. vii. p. 92.

subsequently displayed for the savage idolatries of his countrymen was not for some time calculated to inspire much confidence. In his reign the only two Christian martyrs of the Russian chroniclers were put to death by the fury of the people, because one of them, from natural affection, had refused to give up his son, when he had been devoted by Vladimir to be offered as a sacrifice to Peroun.[1]

But before long the desire of converting so powerful a chief attracted missionaries from many quarters.

First, according to the Russian chronicler, came the Mahometan Bulgarians from the Volga, but "the mercy of Providence inspired Vladimir to give them a decided refusal."

Then appeared Jews from amongst the Chazars, priding themselves on their religion, and telling many stories of the ancient glories of Jerusalem. "But where is your country?" said the prince. "It is ruined by the wrath of God for the sins of our fathers," was the reply. Thereupon the interview was cut short by the decisive answer, "How can I embrace the faith of a people whom their God has utterly abandoned?"

Next appeared Western doctors from Germany, who would have had the prince embrace the creed of Western Christendom. But

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[1] Mouravieff's "Church of Russia," translated by Blackmore, p. 10.

Vladimir knew of no form of Christianity save such as was taught at Byzantium.

Last of all came a teacher from Greece. He reasoned with Vladimir long and earnestly, and learning that he had received emissaries from the Jews, who accused the Christians of worshipping a God who had been crucified, he took the opportunity of relating the true account from beginning to end. Then he went on to speak of judgment to come, and showed the prince on a tablet the scene of the Last Day. On the right were the good going into everlasting joy; on the left were the wicked departing into eternal fire. "Happy are those on the right," said Vladimir; "woe to the sinners who are on the left." "If thou wishest to enter into happiness with those on the right," replied the missionary, "consent to be baptized."[1]

The prince reflected in silence, but deferred his decision. Next year, however, he sent for certain of his nobles, and informed them of the different deputations he had received. "Every man praises his own religion," said they; "send, therefore, certain of thy court to visit the different churches, and bring back word."

Messengers were accordingly despatched to the Jews and Mahometans, as also to the German and Eastern churches. They returned

[1] Mouravieff, p. 11.

a very unfavourable report of all, except only the Church of Constantinople. Of this they could not say enough. When they visited the Byzantine capital, they were conducted to the Church of St. Sophia, then perhaps one of the finest ecclesiastical structures in the world. The patriarch himself celebrated the Liturgy with the utmost pomp and magnificence. The gorgeous processions, the music, the chanting, the appearance of the deacons and sub-deacons with lighted torches and white linen wings on their shoulders, before whom the people prostrated themselves, crying, "Kyrie eleison,"—all this, so utterly different from anything they had ever witnessed amidst their own wild steppes, had such an overpowering effect on the Russian envoys, that on their return to Vladimir they spoke not a word in favour of the other religions, but of the Greek Church they could not say enough.

"When we stood in the temple," said they, "we did not know where we were, for there is nothing else like it upon earth. There in truth God has his dwelling with men, and we can never forget the beauty we saw there. No one who has once tasted sweets will afterwards take that which is bitter, nor can we any longer abide in heathenism." Thereupon the Boyars said to Vladimir, "If the religion of the Greeks had not been good, your grandmother Olga, who was the wisest of women,

would not have embraced it." The weight of the name of Olga decided her grandson, and he said no more in answer than these words, "Where shall we be baptized?"[1]

Still he hesitated before taking so important a step, and "led by a sense which had not yet been purged by grace," to adopt the words of the Russian chronicler, he thought fit to overawe the country where he intended to receive the new faith, and laid siege to Cherson in the Tauride. The siege was long and obstinate. At length, by means of an arrow shot from the town, a priest informed the Russian chief that its safety depended on cutting off the supply of water from the aqueducts. Elated at the prospect of success, Vladimir vowed to be baptized as soon as he should be master of the place. His wish was gratified, and forthwith he sent ambassadors to Constantinople to demand the hand of Anne, sister of the Emperor Basil.

Compliance was promised on condition of his accepting Christianity. Vladimir declared his consent, and the sister of the emperor was constrained to go, and she sailed from Cherson accompanied by a large body of clergy. Her arrival hastened the baptism of the prince, which, according to the Russian authority, was not unaccompanied by miracle. Vladimir was suffering from complaint of the eyes when

[1] Mouravieff, pp. 12 and 353.

his new consort reached him, but no sooner had he risen from the font cleansed of the leprosy of his heathenism, than the bishop of Cherson laid his hands upon his eyes, and his sight was restored, while the prince exclaimed, "Now have I seen the true God."

Thereupon many of his suite consented to follow his example; and shortly afterwards, accompanied by the Greek clergy, he returned to Kieff, one of the great centres of the Slavonic religion, and forthwith ordered that his twelve sons should be baptized, and proceeded to destroy all the monuments of heathenism. The huge idol Peroun was dragged from its temple at a horse's tail, scourged by twelve mounted pursuers, and then flung into the Dnieper. "The people," we are told, "at first followed their idol down the stream, but were soon quieted when they saw it had no power to help itself."

Thus successful, Vladimir felt encouraged to take a further step, and gave orders for the immediate baptism of his people. "Whoever on the morrow," ran the proclamation, "shall not repair to the river, whether rich or poor, I shall hold him for my enemy." On the word all the inhabitants, with their wives and children, flocked in crowds to the Dnieper, and there, in the words of Nestor, "some stood in the water up to their necks, others up to their breasts, holding their young children in their arms, while the priests read the prayers

from the shores, naming at once whole companies by the same name." Vladimir, transported at the sight, cried out, "O great God, who hast made heaven and earth, look down upon thy new people; grant unto them, O Lord, to know thee the true God, as thou hast been made known to Christian lands, and confirm in them a true and unfailing faith; and assist me, O Lord, against my enemy that opposes me, that, trusting in thee and in thy power, I may overcome all his wiles."

The spot where the temple of Peroun had stood now became the site of the Church of St. Basil, and the Greek priests were encouraged by Vladimir in erecting others throughout the towns and villages of his realm. The close of the tenth century saw Michael the first metropolitan travelling from place to place, baptizing and instructing the people. Churches were built, the choral music and service books of Constantinople were introduced, as also the Greek canon law. Before long schools also arose, and the people became familiar with the Sclavonic Scriptures and Liturgy, which the labours of Cyril and Methodius in Bulgaria and Moravia had made ready to their hands.

CHAPTER VII.

RETROSPECT AND REFLECTIONS.

WITH this notice we must close our account of some of the more eminent Apostles of Mediæval Europe.

At this point, therefore, it may not be amiss to look back and gather up some of the chief lessons which their lives enforce, and that with special reference to the missionary history of the Middle Ages.

I. And first let us make a remark respecting the Mediæval period itself.

It is always useful to bear in mind that this period was one of transition, that it was not ultimate but intermediate and preliminary. Trite and commonplace as the observation may seem, it is one which deserves recollection, if we would form a just estimate of the efforts then made to spread a knowledge of Christianity.

We started at that point when the Christian Church had absorbed into herself whatever was good and valuable in the culture of the Greek and Roman world. We have paused before the dawn of the bright morning of the last three hundred years, which have given birth to what has been not inaptly called *Teutonic*, as contrasted with *Latin*, Christianity.

The missionary history, therefore, of the Middle Ages partook of the characteristics of

the Mediæval period itself. To a great extent it was disciplinary and preparatory. During the earlier portion of the period, the Church was called upon to undertake one of the most difficult tasks that could have been presented to her energies and her zeal. In her contact with the world she herself had lost somewhat of her original simplicity, and the form of Christianity which she presented to the new races for their reception was not that of purer and Apostolic times. The stage of culture which the nations had reached whom she was called to civilize was low; they were little capable of discerning the outward from the inward, the letter from the spirit; and before learning the simplest lesson of the Christian faith, they had to unlearn a ferocity and a lawlessness which made them at first a terror even to their teachers.

However defective, therefore, may have been the development obtained during this period, it may be pleaded that on the one hand it was almost inevitable from the nature of the case, and on the other that it was adapted as a transitionary stage for the childhood of the new races. They needed parental discipline before they could learn or value independence. They needed to be governed before they could govern themselves.

At the first promulgation of Christianity, the old Roman empire had, in the providence of God, supplied the framework that held to-

gether the various masses of social life, which the Gospel was intended to pervade. During the Mediæval period, a great Latin Christian empire was, if not needed, at least overruled, to address the nations in language legal and formal, and, so to speak, to naturalize Christianity in the West.

The Primitive Church has been compared to the Patriarchal period of Jewish history, and the Mediæval Church to the Mosaic Dispensation.[1] If the latter comparison is allowed, we may conclude that like that Dispensation the Mediæval Church was destined, after performing its office of legal discipline, *to vanish away;* but that, while needed, it was "of great consequence and undeniable aptitude." "The task," observes Professor Ranke, "of bending the refractory spirit of the Northern tribes to the pure laws of Christian truth was no light one. Wedded, as these nations were, to their long-cherished superstitions, the religious element required a large predominance before it could gain possession of the German character; but by this predominance that close union of Latin and German elements was effected, on which is based the character of Europe in later times. There is a spirit of community in the modern world which has always been regarded as the basis of its progressive improvement,

[1] Dean Stanley's "Sermons on the Apostolic Age," p. 105.

whether in religion, politics, manners, social life, or literature. To bring about this community it was necessary that the Western nations should at one period constitute what may be called a single politico-ecclesiastical state."[1]

II. If from this notice of the Mediæval period itself we turn to its most eminent Apostles, we cannot but be struck with the immense influence of individual energy and the subduing force of personal character.

Around individuals penetrated with Christian zeal and self-denial centred not merely the life, but the very existence of the Churches of Europe. In the most troubled epochs of these troublous times they always appeared to do the work of their day and their generation.

I am with you always, even to the end of the world, said the ascending Saviour to his first Apostles.[2]

Again and again we have seen that promise fulfilled.

While the Roman world was sinking in an abyss of decrepitude, and the continent of Europe was a scene of the wildest disorder and confusion, still there were men, like Ulphilas and Severinus, to sow amongst the new races the seeds of civilization, before they took up their positions on the ruins of the Empire.

When the light of the Frankish Church

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[1] Ranke's "History of the Popes," i. p. 22.
[2] St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

grew dim, and its missionary zeal waxed cold, a beacon was kindled in the secluded Celtic Churches of Ireland and Scotland, whence, in the words of Alcuin, "the light of truth might give shine to many parts of the world," and the disciples of St. Columba might go forth in troops to the forests of Switzerland and of Southern Germany.

When the British Church, in our own island, failed to evangelize her Teutonic invaders, a Gregory was ready to send an Augustine to her shores, whose disciples laboured here side by side with the Celtic missionaries from Iona, till the conversion of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms was complete.

Then when the Teuton of the Continent was crying from his native forests, like the Macedonian of old to the great Apostle of the Gentiles, *Come over and help us*,[1] the members of the churches which Roman and Celtic missionaries had founded throughout the length and breadth of England were prepared to go forth and emulate the zeal which had already founded the monasteries of Luxeuil and St. Gall, and, Teutons themselves, to evangelize the Teutons of Friesland and Northern Germany.

When again an opportunity was offered of carrying the word into the forests of Central Germany, a Winfrid was raised up to go forth

[1] Acts xvi. 9.

and labour with unwearied zeal in Thuringia and Hessia, to persuade numbers of devoted women to leave their homes in England and join him in the work, and to bequeath his martyr spirit to numerous scholars and disciples, like Gregory of Utrecht and Sturmi of Fulda.

When, lastly, on the death of Charlemagne, the barks of the terrible Northmen were prowling round every coast, and carrying havoc and desolation into the fairest fields of France and England, even then an Anskar was found willing to go forth with dauntless bravery and lay the foundations of the Churches of Denmark and Sweden, carrying the Gospel into the very home of the Scandinavian Vikings.

It was the same with the Sclavonic nations. A Cyril and a Methodius were prepared to preach the word in Bohemia and Moravia, a Vicelin to toil amidst perpetual discouragements among the savage Wends, a Meinhard to labour in Livonia, an Adalbert to suffer martyrdom in Prussia, an Otho to penetrate into the furthest recesses of fanatical Pomerania.

Nay, when the crusading spirit had sunk deeply into the heart of European society, and the patience of an Anskar was exchanged for the fiery zeal of the Champion of the Cross, even then there was a Raymund Lull to protest against propagandism by the sword, to

develop *a more excellent way*[1] towards winning over the Moslem warriors than the argument of force, and to seal his constancy with his blood outside the gates of Bugia.

Thus, even in the darkest times, there were ever some streaks of light, and the leaven destined to quicken the whole lump of society was never altogether inert or ineffectual. Take away these men, blot out their influence, and how materially would events have varied, how much the entire history of the Middle Ages would have been altered! They had their defects, the defects of their day and generation. But it becomes us always to speak with gratitude and kindness of men who counted not their lives dear unto them if they might win over to the truth the Teuton and the Sclave, and to whom modern Europe owes much of its present civilization.

III. If we turn from the agents themselves to the work they accomplished, we cannot but notice a striking contrast between the Mediæval and Apostolic missions.

During the Apostolic period, we are chiefly struck by the presence of direct miraculous agency and spiritual gifts, and by the corresponding absence of temporal aid.

In the Sub-apostolic age, again, Christianity found a point of contact with the Greek and Roman mind, as well as a distinct national

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[1] 1 Cor. xii. 31.

culture which it could purify and transfigure. It found also a language long prepared for its service, in which it could everywhere address itself to the intellect and the reason as well as to the conscience of its hearers.

It was the season, too, of its *first love*.[1] Hence the attitude of complete antagonism of its first believers towards paganism, their repudiation of all compromise, their studious renunciation of all heathen principles and practices. It was the season also of the Church's struggle, always for toleration, sometimes for existence. Hence her conversions were individual rather than national; the new faith made its way from below rather than from above; *not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble were called*.[2]

But even before the beginning of the period, whose chief Apostles we have chronicled, all this had passed away.

The consolation of the slave or of the fugitive in the catacombs had become the creed of the Emperor. Instead of pleading for toleration, the Church herself had learnt to be aggressive. The Greek Fathers had moulded her Creeds, Rome had regulated her laws, and bequeathed to her its own love of organization and government. No longer in dread of the caprice or malice of the occupant of the imperial throne, she awaited, with fixed institutions,

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[1] Rev. ii. 4. [2] 1 Cor. i. 26.

magistrates, and laws, the incoming of the new races.

For a while, indeed, her own safety seemed in peril; but when the agitated elements of society had been calmed, she emerged to present to the world the single stable institution that had survived the shock.

In her dealings, therefore, with the new races, there was a great change from the missions of the first age. Whereas the latter had, from the necessity of the case, worked upwards from below, till at length the number of converts became too great and too influential to be ignored by the ruler, and the voice from the catacombs found an echo in the palace, during the Mediæval period all this was reversed.

With an almost monotonous uniformity, in Ireland and England, in Southern and in Northern Germany, among the Sclavonic no less than the Scandinavian nations, the conversion of the people followed that of the king or chief.

The fourth century, indeed, presents the somewhat anomalous spectacle of the emperor Constantine, as yet unbaptized, taking an active part in Christian preaching.[1] But turn where we will in this age, we cannot but be struck by the religious aspect of the temporal rule. The Apostle of Ireland addresses him-

[1] Dean Stanley's "Eastern Church," p, 198.

self to Irish, Columba, the founder of Iona, to Pictish princes. Columbanus rebukes Thierri and Brunehaut; Boniface discusses plans for his Thuringian missions in the courts of Austrasian kings; his disciples follow in the track of Charlemagne's victorious armies. It is with a prince of Denmark that Anskar embarks on his first missionary voyage. It is to Bogoris, the Bulgarian chief, that Methodius displays the awful picture of the Judgment Day. A Polish duke supplies all the necessities of Otho, the Apostle of Pomerania, while another welcomes him on entering the land he had come to evangelize, and offers to protect him with a regiment of soldiers. Moreover, if anything were wanting to complete the picture, it is supplied by the record of the visit of the missionaries of the Eastern Church to the Russian court, where the religious aspect of the temporal ruler finds its highest expression, and Vladimir bears the same title as the emperor Constantine, Isapostolos, *Vladimir, equal to an apostle.*

Various explanations have been offered to account for this feature of the Mediæval missions.

Some have ascribed it to the deliberate policy of the missionaries themselves. Others have dwelt on the aristocratic character of society amongst the Germanic tribes, and have drawn attention to the docile and imitative tendencies of the Sclavonic races.

But we need not linger over these speculations. The success of the Mediæval missionary did not more depend on the will of princes than that of the Reformation movement in every country that became Protestant in the sixteenth century. St. Boniface only expresses the experience of many eminent missionaries of more recent times when he writes, "Without the patronage of the Frankish chiefs, I can neither govern the people, exercise discipline over the clergy and monks, nor prohibit heathen writers."

And if these national conversions depended so much on the smile or favour of the prince, we cannot fail to observe how often the conversion of the prince himself was due to his alliance in marriage with a Christian queen. The story of Clovis and Clotilda, of Ethelbert and Bertha, of Vladimir and Anne, repeats itself again and again.

It has been noticed that the interpretation so generally adopted by early Christian writers of the words of St. Paul, *What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O husband, whether thou shalt save thy wife?* [1] exercised no small influence in early times in promoting the conversion of unbelieving husbands by believing wives. At any rate, the saying of St. Chrysostom, that "no teacher has so much effect in conversion

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 16.

as a wife," has been verified not only in the instance of the two great kingdoms of France and England, but accounts, in some measure, for these rapid conversions of whole tribes, which form so characteristic a feature in the missionary annals of this period. The intermarriage of the Goths with their Christian captives in the days of Ulphilas, of the Saxons with the conquered Britons in England, of the Northmen with the Franks in Normandy, hints at a solution of what is otherwise perplexing. In the latter case, moreover, it suggests a reason why the followers of Rollo ceased to be Teutons as well as Pagans, why they became Frenchmen as well as Christians.[1]

IV. Another feature likewise demands attention, namely, the prominence in the execution of the work of the Monastic Orders.

We have glanced at the physical necessities, so to speak, which dictated the employment of these heroic pioneers. We have seen how many of the fairest provinces of the Roman empire, groaning under the weight of merciless taxation, had wellnigh ceased to till the soil; how many tracts had been utterly depopulated by the ceaseless levies for the imperial armies; how before the inroad of barbarous invaders village life had ceased, and towns, forsaken by their inhabitants, had gradually

[1] Milman's "Latin Christianity," ii. 434.

disappeared; how dense woods had arisen, and completely concealing the ruins of temples and baths, villas and streets, spread onwards till at length they joined the immense and impenetrable forests which covered the whole extent of France, Switzerland, Belgium, and both banks of the Rhine.

The question, we have said, was, Who would plunge into the gloom of these forests, proclaim the word of life to the wild tribes that dwelt around them, and teach them the first principles of civilization?

It was a momentous question, but the lives of the Apostles of Mediæval Europe tell us how it was answered. Armed with none of the inventions of modern industry, strong only in invisible protection, the monastery sent forth hundreds of devoted men to undertake the work. "It is an ugly thing for an unarmed man," writes Professor Kingsley, "to traverse without compass the bush of Australia or New Zealand, where there are no wild beasts. But it was uglier still to start out under the dark roof of those primæval Germanic forests. Knights, when they rode thither, went armed *cap-à-pie*, like Sintram through the dark valley, trusting in God and their good swords. Chapmen and merchants stole through it by a few tracks in great companies, armed with bill and bow. Peasants ventured into it a few miles, to cut timber, and find forage for their swine, and whispered wild

legends of the ugly things therein—and sometimes, too, never came home. Away it stretched, from the fair Rhineland, wave after wave of oak and alder, beech and pine, God alone knew how far, into the land of night and wonder, and the infinite unknown, full of elk and bison, bear and wolf, lynx and glutton, and perhaps of worse beasts still." [1]

But the disciples of St. Columba and St. Boniface did not hesitate to penetrate the darkness of these primæval forests, there to live and pray and study, and till the waste.

Strange indeed, passing strange, must these pioneers of civilization have appeared to heathen Suevians and Allmannen. They themselves knew of no power save physical force. These wanderers seemed to hold physical force in utter contempt. They themselves acknowledged no influence but that of the sword and the battle-axe, the club and the spear. These soldiers of an Invisible King seemed to acknowledge no such weapons in their warfare. And yet out of weakness they were made strong. Where others trembled, they showed no fear; where others ventured nothing, they ventured everything. It was clear that they made little of Frankish count or Suevian king. In their palaces they were no reeds shaken by the wind. A Thierri quailed before them. A

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[1] "The Monks and the Heathen," *Good Words*, Jan. 1863.

Brunehaut could not endure their pure and upright life. A Radbod was forced to acknowledge the fearlessness with which they rebuked cruelty and barbarity. Such men the simple people could not but revere, and believe to be possessed of mysterious power. They might at times be austere; they might with more zeal than love protest against their idolatries; but to the widow and the orphan, to the lame and the blind, to the sick and the afflicted, they were ever fast and patient friends, and for them they ever had words of true comfort and mysterious consolation.

The wisdom of Providence assigned the order in which these Apostles of Civilization were to enter upon the work.

The Celtic disciple of St. Columba went first. The Anglo-Saxon disciple of St. Boniface followed. Eager, ardent, impetuous, the Celtic anchorites seemed to take the Continent by storm. With a dauntless zeal that nothing could check, an enthusiasm that nothing could stay, they flung themselves into the gloomiest solitudes of Switzerland and Belgium, and before long their wooden huts made way for the statelier buildings of Luxeuil and St. Gall.

These Celtic pioneers laid the foundations. The disciples of St. Boniface raised the superstructure. With practised eye they sought out the proper site for their monastic home, saw that it occupied a central position with reference to the tribes amongst whom they pro-

posed to labour, that it possessed a fertile soil, that it was near some friendly watercourse.

These points secured, the word was given, the trees were felled, the forest was cleared, the monastery arose. Soon the voice of prayer and praise was heard in those gloomy solitudes. The thrilling chant and plaintive litany awoke unwonted echoes amidst the forest glades. The brethren were never idle. While some educated children, whom they had redeemed from death or torture, others copied manuscripts, or toiled over the illuminated missal, or transcribed a Gospel; others cultivated the soil, guided the plough, planted the apple-tree and the vine, arranged the bee-hives, erected the water-mill, opened the mine, and thus presented to the eyes of men the kingdom of Christ as the kingdom of One, who had redeemed the bodies no less than the souls of His creatures.

Such were the modes in which these Apostles of Mediæval Europe accomplished the work of their day and their generation.

Their numbers, their union, their singular habits, could not fail to make a deep impression on the heathen tribes whom they addressed. The contrast between the teachers and the taught was sharp and startling. On the one side was a horror of all dependence, and an indomitable spirit of restlessness; on the other was a life of continued self-sacrifice and obedience.

Grant that the institutions which they founded, though "clear in the spring," proved "miry in the stream;" grant that, in the days of their prosperity and ease, when the original necessities which had called them forth had ceased to operate, they forgot their original simplicity, and became too often a by-word and a proverb; yet we must never forget what European civilization owes to the self-devotion of a Columbanus and a Gallus, a Boniface and a Sturmi. "The monks," writes Livingstone, "did not disdain to hold the plough. They introduced fruit-trees, flowers, vegetables, in addition to teaching and emancipating the serfs. Their monasteries were mission-stations which resembled ours in being dispensaries for the sick, almshouses for the poor, and nurseries of learning. Can we learn nothing from them in their prosperity as the schools of Europe, and see naught in their history but the pollution and laziness of their decay?"

CHAPTER VIII.

RETROSPECT AND REFLECTIONS.

It is impossible to close a review, however brief, of the work of the Apostles of Mediæval Europe, without noticing one or two additional points.

I. And the first which calls for remark is

the national and seemingly indiscriminate baptisms which the influence of various princes secured, and the Church did not hesitate to administer.

It is obvious that in the Middle Ages necessity would often dictate a departure from ordinary rules. But it is hardly possible to read of the multitudes admitted to baptism after a very limited preparation without suspecting that there was at times a far greater anxiety to multiply the number than to enlighten the minds of the proselytes.

It is true, indeed, that we ought to bear in mind the fewness of the teachers, the great masses of the people, and the general ignorance ; still the habitual practice of thus administering the sacred rite must have been the reverse of an adequate preservative against the danger of relapse. The baptism of the ten thousand subjects of Ethelbert in the waters of the Swale, of the many thousand Teutons by the Apostle of Germany, of the Russians in the waters of the Dnieper, of the Pomeranians by Bishop Otho, the absence of adequate preparation, and the influence of the prince or king, will cause such administrations to be regarded by some as a subject for a compassionate smile rather than for regard or forgiveness.

But in forming a fair opinion on the subject, it ought to be borne in mind that the Mediæval missionaries had to contend with

unusual difficulties. To say nothing of the relaxed condition of society, of the constant wars which were ever setting tribe against tribe and people against people, of the fact that the administrators of the baptismal rite were in many cases themselves but recently converted, there were other and more formidable difficulties in regard to the recipients of the rite themselves.

For they had known nothing of that long education under a preliminary Dispensation, which had exerted its influences over those three thousand converts whom the Apostle Peter admitted into the Church in one day. The revelation of an external law and the warnings of the prophets had not made Monotheism natural to them, or taught, "here a little, and there a little, line upon line, and precept upon precept," those elementary religious truths which appear to us so easy to apprehend, because we have lived from childhood in an atmosphere permeated with their influence.

They were not proselytes of the gate, to whom, like the Ethiopian eunuch, a Philip could explain the true meaning of sacred prophecy, and receive into the Christian Church on the simplest profession of belief. Neither were they in a condition analogous to that of the Græco-Roman world at the first promulgation of the faith, convinced of its inability to regenerate itself, and wearied of

its long tossing on the ocean of Uncertainty. The utter failure of Art, and Science, and Philosophy to solve the deepest problems of life, had not brought them as proselytes in riper years to "the True Philosophy."

Infants alike in knowledge and civilization, they were admitted to infant baptism by teachers themselves in many cases but imperfectly educated, whose whole theology was often contained in the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. It was "the day of small things," and the men who did not despise that day, but acted up to the extent of their knowledge, hoping for a future day of greater things, accomplished no mean work, and reaped no inconsiderable harvest.

II. We have abundant evidence, however, of the use of a course of instruction by the Mediæval missionaries as preparatory to baptism, which was far from being unworthy of its object. Their biographers, it is true, have not given us such full and complete information on the subject as might have been desired; still such information as we possess is full of interest.

Much, indeed, has been said of a peculiar natural and national predisposition on the part of the Teutonic nations towards Christianity.

We admit freely that under the poetic legends of Teutonic mythology there lay a residuum of truth, to which the new faith could attach itself, and which it could trans-

figure. We admit that in its ideas respecting the origin of the world, in its distorted legends of the Creation, in its conception, however much afterwards overlaid, of a great Allfadir, in its belief in the final triumph of good over evil, in its traditions of a conflict between Balder, the lord of light and life, and the goddess of death, and in its hope of an ultimate restoration of all things, there may have been scattered seeds which Christianity might quicken and make fruitful. Yet it must be conceded that there were few amongst the missionaries of this period who could, even if they had been willing, have seen the matter in this light.

That largeness of heart, that more than human wisdom, which suggested to the great Apostle of the Gentiles, when he stood on Mars Hill, the propriety of "taking his smooth stone," as Chrysostom expresses it, "out of the Athenians' own brook," and of finding a common ground between himself and those whom he addressed, are qualities rare at all times, and which it would be folly to expect in the period with which we are concerned.

The teaching, however, of the Apostles of Mediæval Europe, so far as it has come down to us, had one great merit. From first to last it was eminently *objective*. It dealt mainly with the great *facts* of Christianity. It proclaimed the incarnation of the Saviour, his

life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, his future coming to judge the quick and dead, and then it proceeded to treat of the good works which ought to flow from the vital reception of these Christian truths.

To the Celtic worshippers of the powers of nature, and especially of the sun, we saw how the Apostle of Ireland proclaimed the existence of one God, the Creator of all things, and then proceeded to dwell upon the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, whom he declared to be the *true Sun*, of whom, and by whom, and to whom, are all things.

Similarly we saw how Augustine directed the attention of the royal worshipper of Odin and Thor in Kent to the picture of the Saviour on the cross, and then told him of such events in his wondrous life as were likely to make an impression on his mind; how at his birth a star appeared in the East; how he walked upon the sea; how at his death the sun withdrew his shining; how at his resurrection the earth trembled and the rocks were rent; how, having been looked for as the Great Deliverer of mankind from the beginning of the world, and having sealed his mission as divine, he ascended up on high, and was now worshipped everywhere as the only-begotten Son of God.[1]

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[1] Compare "Vita S. Augustin." Migne, "Patrologia," Sæc. vii. p. 61.

The sermon of Gallus on the occasion of the consecration of his disciple to the see of Constance is interesting from the testimony it bears to his intimate acquaintance with the Old Testament history, and the order of the events in the Saviour's life, and the knowledge it displays is far in advance of that which is popularly ascribed to the period in which he lived.

The correspondence of Daniel, bishop of Winchester, with his friend and fellow-countryman St. Boniface, is peculiarly deserving of notice, as illustrating the way in which he would have him deal with the errors and superstitions of their Teutonic kinsmen, and win them over to the right faith. If from this prudent advice we turn to the fifteen sermons of the great Apostle of Germany which have been preserved to us,[1] we have ample proof that he desired something far more real than a mere superficial form of Christian belief.

The first of these treats of the right faith, of the doctrine of the Trinity, the relation of baptism to the remission of sins, the resurrection of the dead, the future judgment, and the necessity of repentance.

The second, preached on Christmas Day, is concerned with the creation of man, the history of his fall, the promise of a Saviour, and his first Advent in great humility.

[1] Migne, "Patrologia Latina," Sæc. viii. p. 813.

The third has for its subject the twofold operation of justification.

The fourth treats of the Beatitudes.

The fifth of faith and the works of love.

The sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth of deadly sins and the Ten Commandments.

The tenth and eleventh are mainly concerned with further explanations of man's original state, of his fall and redemption through Christ, of the hope of the world to come, and the necessity of preparation by leading a fresh and holy life for the Day of Judgment. The subject of the twelfth and thirteenth is an explanation of the necessity of observing the season of Lent; while the fourteenth is an Easter sermon.

The last appears to have been preached on the occasion of the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism, and illustrates the simple missionary character of the rest.

"Listen, my brethren," it begins, 'and consider attentively what it was ye renounced at your baptism. Ye renounced the devil and all his works. What are the works of the devil? They are pride, idolatry, envy, backbiting, lying, perjury, hatred, variance, fornication, adultery, theft, drunkenness, sorcery, witchcraft, recourse to amulets and charms. These and such like are the works of the devil, and all such ye renounced at your baptism, and, as the Apostle saith, 'They who do such things are worthy of death, and shall not enter

into the kingdom of heaven.' But because we believe that through God's mercy ye renounce all these sins in heart and life, therefore, that ye may deserve to obtain pardon, I warn you, brethren beloved, to remember what ye promised unto God Almighty.

"For ye promised to believe in God Almighty, and in Jesus Christ his Son, and in the Holy Spirit, One God Almighty in a perfect Trinity.

"These are the commandments of God, which we ought to observe and keep: ye must love the Lord, in whom ye have professed your belief, with all your heart, and mind, and strength. Be ye patient, tender-hearted, kind, chaste, and pure. Teach your children to love God, and your household in like manner. Reconcile them that are at variance. Let him that judges give righteous judgment, let him not receive bribes, for bribes blind the eyes even of the wise.

"Observe the Lord's Day, assemble yourselves at church, and there pray, not making vain repetitions. Give alms according to your means, for as water extinguisheth the flame, so almsgiving blotteth out sin. Observe hospitality, visit the sick, minister to widows and orphans, give tithes to the Church, and what ye would not men should do unto you, that do ye not unto them. Fear God, and him only. Servants, be obedient unto your masters, and maintain the rights of your master among your

fellow-servants. Learn diligently the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, and teach them to your children, and to those for whom ye stood sponsors at their baptism. Practise fasting, love righteousness, resist the devil, receive the Eucharist at the stated seasons. These, and such like, are the commands that God bade you do and keep.

"Believe that Christ will come, that there will be a resurrection of the body, and a general judgment of mankind. Then the wicked will be separated from the good, and the one will go into eternal fire, the other into eternal bliss, and they shall enjoy everlasting life with God without any more death, light without darkness, health without sickness, happiness without fear, joy without sorrow; there shall be peace for evermore, and the righteous shall shine forth as the sun, for *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what things God hath prepared for them that love him.*"[1]

Such was the missionary instruction which the Apostle of Germany imparted to his flock.

Further information on the same point is supplied by the correspondence of Alcuin with the emperor Charlemagne, who had entrusted Arno, archbishop of Salzburg, with a mission amongst the Avars. He congratulates the emperor on his success and the prospect of the

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

speedy spread of the faith, but impresses upon him the necessity for due attention to public preaching and an orderly celebration of baptism.[1] A mere external washing of the body, he reminds him, will avail nothing, unless the mind has first duly received.

"The Apostolic order," he observes, "is first to teach all nations, then is to follow the administration of baptism and further instruction in Christian duties. Therefore in teaching those of riper years, that order should be strictly observed, which the blessed Augustine has laid down in his treatise on the very subject:[2]

"1. First, a man ought to be instructed in the immortality of the soul, in the future life, and its retribution hereafter of good and evil.

"2. Secondly, he ought to learn for what crimes and sins he will be condemned to future punishment, and for what good and beneficial actions he will enjoy eternal happiness with Christ.

"3. Thirdly, he ought to be very carefully instructed in the doctrine of the Trinity, in the advent of the Saviour for the salvation of mankind, in his life, his passion, his resurrection, his ascension, and future coming to judge the world. Strengthened and thoroughly instructed in this faith, let him be baptized,

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[1] See Migne, "Patrologia," Sæc. ix. p. 187.

[2] "De Catechizandis Rudibus."

and afterwards let the precepts of the Gospel be further unfolded by public preaching till he attain to the measure of the stature of a perfect man, and become a worthy habitation for the Holy Ghost."

In another letter, after exhorting the emperor to provide competent instructors for his newly-conquered subjects, he remarks that they ought to follow the example of the Apostles in preaching the word of God. "For they," he says, "were wont at the beginning to feed their hearers with milk, that is, with gentle precepts, even as the Apostle Paul saith: *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*[1] And thereby that great Apostle of the whole world, Christ speaking in him, signified, that newly-converted tribes ought to be nourished with simple precepts, like as children are with milk, lest if austerer precepts be taught at first, their weak mind should reject what it drinks Whence also the Lord Jesus Christ himself in the Gospel replied to those asking him why his disciples fasted not: *Men put not new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish; but they put new wine into new bottles,*

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.

and both are preserved;[1] 'for,' as Jerome saith, 'the virgin purity of the soul which has never been contaminated with vice is very different from that which has long been in bondage to foul lusts and passions.'"

III. And here a few remarks on the policy of the missionaries as regards heathenism may not be out of place, especially as they have sometimes been accused of too great accommodation to the weaknesses and scruples of their pagan converts.

A review of the efforts made during this period does not tend to substantiate the charge at least against the missionaries themselves. Again and again we have seen them hewing down the images, profaning the temples, and protesting with vehemence against sorcery, witchcraft, and other heathen practices. The Apostle of Ireland did not, as we saw, spare the great object of Celtic worship; his countrymen, Columbanus and Gallus, provoked the grievous wrath of the Suevians by their hostility to Thor and Odin; Willibrord, at the peril of his life, polluted the sacred fountains of Fosites-land; Boniface risked not only personal safety, but all his influence over the people of Hesse by hewing down the sacred oak of Geismar; the address of Lebuin to the Saxon assembly did not betray one easily "shaken by the wind;" Bogoris flung away

[1] Matt. ix. 17.

his idols at the first request of Methodius; Vladimir flogged the huge image of Peroun, and flung it into the waters of the Dnieper before the face of his people; Olaf and Thangbrand overthrew the monuments of Scandinavian idolatry with a zeal worthy of a Jehu; Bishop Otho in Pomerania insisted, in spite of imminent danger to himself, on destroying various Sclavonic temples.

As far as such external protests against idolatry could avail, their missionary zeal did not err on the side of laxity. It cannot be said that there was any accommodation here to the views of the heathens, or anything like the policy of the unworthy followers of Xavier in India.

In several cases, however, the advice of Gregory the Great to Augustine appears to have been mainly followed, at least by the Anglo-Saxon missionaries. From the letter of that Pope to Mellitus [1] it seems that the question of the destruction of the heathen temples had caused him considerable anxiety, and had long occupied his thoughts. The conclusion to which he at last came was that, instead of being destroyed, they should be "cleansed from heathen pollution by being sprinkled with holy water," and consecrated to Christian purposes by the erection of the Christian altar and the "deposition of relics of the saints."

[1] Epp. Greg. lib. xi. 76; Bede, i. 30, "*Diu* mecum de causa Anglorum cogitans tractavi."

Whatever may be the reason of the strange contrast between the policy advocated in this letter and in that addressed to Ethelbert, it is certain that Gregory was wisely anxious to facilitate the transition from heathenism to Christianity. In this spirit, therefore, he advised Augustine to deal cautiously with the heathen festivals which were celebrated in or near the temples; he would not have them abolished altogether, but suggested that on the aniversaries of the Martyrs, whose relics had been placed in the temples now converted into churches, booths should be erected, and the people permitted to celebrate their feasts in honour not of the old pagan deities, but of the True God, the Giver of all good.

Gregory, whose spirit is said to have yearned towards the old heathen sages who had died without hearing of the work of Christ, considered that he had found a precedent for the advice he now gave in the divine system of educating the Jewish people after their departure from Egypt. "They had been wont," he remarks, "to sacrifice to false gods; they were not forbidden now altogether to abstain from offering sacrifice. The object only of their worship was changed, and the same animals they had been wont to sacrifice to idols, they now sacrificed in honour of the Lord their God."

Grant that he may have regarded the Jewish sacrificial system from far too low a point

of view, still, in the circumstances of the Anglo-Saxons just emerging from heathenism, there was much to remind him of the Jewish nation in its long contact with idolatry in Egypt. The latter, unfitted, as the very genius of their language attests, for abstract thought or metaphysical speculations, absolutely required material symbols, and with a Book of Symbols they were mercifully provided.

The same mode of proceeding, Gregory was of opinion, was requisite in the case of the Anglo-Saxon converts, and if existing ceremonies could only be exalted and purified, a gradual ascent might be supplied towards understanding higher truths. Where, as in England, and probably on the Continent, every town had its religious establishment, the Mediæval missionaries, themselves in many cases but lately converted, may be pardoned for the natural desire to make as much as possible of the *religio loci*, and to avail themselves, so far as it was practicable, of old associations.

Architectural reasons may very probably have prevented in many cases a compliance with Gregory's advice, but its spirit was obeyed, wherever the Teutonic missionary went forth to evangelize Teutons. And independently of the sound principle which was thus taught, "that the evil spirit can be cast out of institutions without destroying them," the early missionaries must have found that it is easy to destroy the image or fling it into the

stream, but very hard to extirpate a faith, and eradicate time-honoured superstitions.

They to whom they preached were, as we have already seen, worshippers of all above them and around them; in the skies, the woods, the waters, they found their oracles and sacred books; they revelled in spirits of the grove and of the fountain, of the lake and of the hill; they believed devoutly in divinations, and presages, and lots. Imagine, then, one who from his earliest years had lived and moved in the atmosphere of a faith like this, which identified itself with all the associations of nature and the world around, which taught him to hear voices from another world in the forest roaring around his cottage in the wintry night, or on the lake where he flung his net;—imagine such an one, out of deference to the will of his chief, or the stern command of the conqueror, in an age of "implicit, childlike, trusting, fearing, rejoicing faith," exchanging his early creed for that of the Christian; and can we wonder that the old ideas long retained their sway, or that councils were obliged to denounce, and the missionary to inveigh against, lingering traces of well-worship and tree-worship, against divination and witchcraft?

Can we wonder that in an age when the old divinities were still regarded as real powers, which were not entirely bereft of all influence over their apostate votaries, even after they

had bowed before the uplifted cross, or been signed with the same symbol in the baptismal stream, the missionary was tempted, almost unconsciously, to meet heathenism halfway, and to Christianize superstitions he found himself powerless to dispel?

Can we wonder that many, unable to resist the glamour of old beliefs, in the midst of which their forefathers "had lived and moved and had their being," were still prone at times to offer the ancient sacrifices, and, as we gather from the letters of Boniface, to resort to the old magic and soothsaying? When we remember that as late as the fifteenth century the Church was engaged in eradicating the remains of Sclavonic heathenism, and protesting against a rude fetishism and serpent worship, it is surely no matter of surprise that the boundary line between the old and the new faith was not very sharply defined, that a continual interchange long went on between Christian legends and heathen myths.

It was no settled policy on the part of the forefathers of European civilization, but the spirit of the age itself, which refused to disjoin the judicial assembly from its old accompanying heathen rites; which kept heathen festivals on Christian holidays, and celebrated heathen festivals, purified of their grosser elements, under a Christian guise; which exchanged the remembrance cup once drunk at the banquet in honour of Thor and Woden

for a similar salutation of the Apostles, and in place of the image of Frigga caused the staff of some saint to be carried round the cornfields to drive away the fieldmice or the caterpillars; which preserved the heathen names of the days of the week, and inextricably united the name of a Saxon goddess with the most joyous of the Christian festivals: names which have survived all the intervening changes of thought and feeling, and remain to the present day the undying memorials of the period of twilight between heathendom and Christianity.

IV. Our retrospect has, from the nature of the case, been chiefly concerned with the more legitimate efforts made during the earlier period of the Middle Ages to propagate the Gospel. But during the latter period we noticed how other agencies besides the holy lives and eloquent tongues of devoted men, besides the monastic colony and the missionary school, were employed to complete the circle of European Christendom. We saw how the genuine missionary spirit became tinged with fanaticism, and was succeeded by violent and coercive propagandism.

Whenever the Church effected anything real or lasting, it was when she was content to persevere in a spirit of absolute dependence on Him who has promised to be with her *always, even unto the end of the world;* when in the person of a Columba, a Boniface, a Sturmi,

an Anskar, a Raymund Lull, she was contented to go forth and sow the seed, and then leave it to do its work, remembering that if "earthly seed is long in springing up, imperishable seed is longer still." Whenever she failed in her efforts, it was when she forgot in whose strength she went forth, and for whose glory alone she existed, when she was tempted to resort to other means and to try other expedients than those which her great Head had sanctioned when, instead of patiently leaving the good seed to grow of itself, she strove to hurry its development, and was impatient of small beginnings and weak instruments.

For if the retrospect of the missionary efforts of the Middle Ages teaches one lesson more than another, it is the value of those "slender wires" on which the greatest events are often hung, and the importance of not despising the day of small things. "Let any one," writes the author of the "Historical Memoirs of Canterbury," "sit on the hill of the little Church of St. Martin at Canterbury, and look on the view which is there spread before his eyes. Immediately below are the towers of the great Abbey of St. Augustine, where Christian learning and civilization first struck root in the Anglo-Saxon race; and within which now, after a lapse of many centuries, a new institution has arisen, intended to carry far and wide, to countries of which

Gregory and Augustine had never heard, the blessings which they gave to us. . . . . From Canterbury, the first English Christian city—from Kent, the first English Christian kingdom—has, by degrees, arisen the whole constitution of a Church and State in England, which now binds together the whole British Empire. And from the Christianity here established in England has flowed, by direct consequence, first, the Christianity of Germany—then, after a long interval, of North America,—and lastly, we may trust, in time, of all India and Australasia. The view from St. Martin's Church is indeed one of the most inspiriting that can be found in the world; there is none to which I would more willingly take any one who doubted whether a small beginning would lead to a great and lasting good,—none which carries us more vividly back to the past, or more hopefully forward to the future." [1]

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[1] Stanley's "Memorials of Canterbury," p. 39.

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